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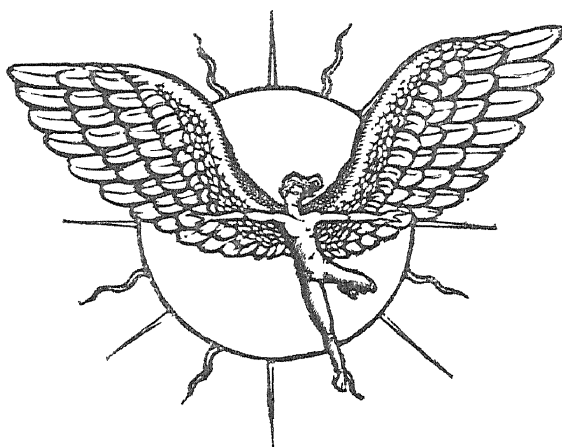
The Poems and Verses.
of
John Keats

The Poems & Verses
of
JOHN KEATS

edited and arranged in chronological order by

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME II



LONDON
THE KING'S PRINTERS
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(CONTINUED)

Acrostic

To Georgiana Augusta Keats

GIVE me your patience Sister while I frame
Exact in capitals your golden name;
Or sue the fair Apollo and he will
Rouse from his heavy slumber and instil
Great love in me for thee and Poesy.
Imagine not that greatest mastery
And kingdom over all the Realms of verse,
Nears more to Heaven in aught, than when we nurse
And surety give to Love and Brotherhood.

Anthropophagi in Othello's mood,
Ulysses stormed, and his enchanted belt
Glow with the Muse, but they are never felt
Unbosomed so, and so eternal made,
Such tender incense in their Laurel shade
To all the regent sisters of the Nine,
As this poor offering to you sister mine.

Kind sister! aye, this third name says you are;
Enchanted has it been the Lord knows where;
And may it taste to you like good old wine,
Take you to real happiness and give
Sons, daughters and a home like honied hive.

(JUNE 27, 1818)

Sweet, Sweet is the Greeting of Eyes

SWEET, sweet is the greeting of eyes,
And sweet is the voice in its greeting,
When Adieux have grown old and Good-byes
Fade away where old time is retreating.

Warm the nerve of a welcoming hand
And earnest a kiss on the brow,
When we meet over sea and o'er Land
Where furrows are new to the plough.

(JUNE 27, 1818)

On visiting the Tomb of Burns

THE town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,
The clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all seem,
Though beautiful, cold—strange—as in a dream,
I dreamed long ago, now new begun.
The short-lived paly Summer is but won
From Winter's ague, for one hour's gleam;
Though sapphire-warm, their stars do never beam:
All is cold Beauty; pain is never done:
For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise,
The Real of Beauty, free from that dead hue
Sickly imagination and sick pride
Can wan upon it? Burns! with honour due
I oft have honour'd thee. Great shadow! hide
Thy face; I sin against thy native skies.

(JULY 1, 1818)

Meg Merrilies

OLD Meg she was a Gipsy;
And liv'd upon the moors:
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.

Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants, pods o' broom;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a church-yard tomb.

Her Brothers were the craggy hills,
Her Sisters larchen trees;
Alone with her great family
She liv'd as she did please.

No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the Moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark glen Yew
She wove, and she would sing.

And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited Mats o' Rushes,
And gave them to the Cottagers
She met among the Bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen,
And tall as Amazon:
An old red blanket cloak she wore,
A chip hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere—
She died full long ago!

(JULY 2, 1818)

A Song about Myself

THERE was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty boy was he,
He would not stop at home,
He could not quiet be—
He took
In his Knapsack
A Book
Full of vowels
And a shirt
With some towels—
A slight cap
For night cap—
A hair brush,
Comb ditto,
New Stockings
For old ones
Would split O!
This Knapsack
Tight at 's back
He rivetted close
And followéd his Nose
To the North,
To the North,
And follow'd his nose
To the North.

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he,
For nothing would he do
But scribble poetry—

He took
An ink stand
In his hand
And a Pen
Big as ten
In the other,
And away
In a Pother
He ran
To the mountains
And fountains
And ghostes
And Postes
And witches
And ditches
And wrote
In his coat
When the weather
Was cool,
Fear of gout,
And without
When the weather
Was warm—
Och the charm
When we choose
To follow one's nose
To the north,
To the north,
To follow one's nose
To the north!

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he,

He kept little fishes
In washing tubs three
In spite
Of the might
Of the Maid
Nor afraid
Of his Granny-good—
He often would
Hurly burly
Get up early
And go
By hook or crook
To the brook
And bring home
Miller's thumb,
Tittlebat
Not over fat,
Minnows small
As the stall
Of a glove,
Not above
The size
Of a nice
Little Baby's
Little fingers—
O he made
'Twas his trade
Of Fish a Pretty Kettle
A Kettle—
A Kettle
Of Fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle!

There was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty Boy was he,
He ran away to Scotland
The people for to see—
Then he found
That the ground
Was as hard,
That a yard
Was as long,
That a song
Was as merry,
That a cherry
Was as red—
That lead
Was as weighty,
That fourscore
Was as eighty,
That a door
Was as wooden
As in England—
So he stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd,
He wonder'd,
He stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd.

(JULY 2, 1818)

A Galloway Song

AN! ken ye what I met the day
Out oore the Mountains
A coming down by craggies grey
An mossie fountains—
Ah goud hair'd Marie yeve I pray
Ane minute's guessing—
For that I met upon the way
Is past expressing.
As I stood where a rocky brig
A torrent crosses
I spied upon a misty rig
A troop o' Horses—
And as they trotted down the glen
I sped to meet them.
To see if I might know the men
To stop and greet them.
First Willie on his sleek mare came
At canting gallop
His long hair rustled like a flame
On board a shallop
Then came his brother Rab and then
Young Peggy's Mither
And Peggy too—adown the glen
They went together—
I saw her wrappit in her hood
Fra wind and raining—
Her cheek was flush wi' timid blood
Twixt growth and waning—
She turn'd her dazed head full oft
For there her Brithers
Came riding with her Bridegroom soft
And mony ithers.

Young Tam came up an' eyed me quick
With reddened cheek—
Braw Tam was daffed like a chick—
He coud na speak—
Ah Marie they are all gane hame
Through blustering weather
An' every heart is full on flame
An' light as feather.
Ah! Marie they are all gone hame
Fra happy wedding,
Whilst I—Ah is it not a shame?
Sad tears am shedding.

(JULY 10, 1818)

To Ailsa Rock

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean-pyramid!

Give answer by thy voice, the sea-fowl's screams!

When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?

When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid?

How long is't since the mighty power bid

Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?

Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,

Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid.

Thou answer'st not; for thou art dead asleep.

Thy life is but two dead eternities—

The last in air, the former in the deep;

First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies—

Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,

Another cannot wake thy giant size!

(JULY 10-11, 1818)

*Written in the Cottage where Burns
was born*

THIS mortal body of a thousand days
Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,
Where thou didst dream alone on budded bays,
Happy and thoughtless of thy day of doom!
My pulse is warm with thine own Barley-bree,
My head is light with pledging a great soul,
My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal;
Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find
The meadow thou hast tramped o'er and o'er,—
Yet can I think of thee till thought is blind,—
Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name,—
O smile among the shades, for this is fame!

(JULY 12, 1818)

Lines written in the Highlands after a Visit to Burns's Country

THERE is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain,
Where patriot battle has been fought, where glory had the
gain;
There is a pleasure on the heath where Druids old have
been,
Where mantles grey have rustled by and swept the nettles
green;
There is a joy in every spot made known in times of old,
New to the feet, although each tale a hundred times be told;
There is a deeper joy than all, more solemn in the heart,
More parching to the tongue than all, of more divine a
smart,
When weary steps forget themselves, upon a pleasant turf,
Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or sea-shore iron scurf,
Toward the castle or the cot, where long ago was born
One who was great through mortal days, and died of fame
unshorn.
Light heather-bells may tremble then,—but they are far
away;
Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern,—the Sun may hear
his lay;
Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows clear,—
But their low voices are not heard, though come on travels
drear;
Blood-red the Sun may set behind black mountain peaks;
Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in caves and
weedy creeks;
Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the air;
Ring-doves may fly convuls'd across to some high cedar'd
lair;

But the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the ground,
As Palmer's, that with weariness, mid-desert shrine hath
found,

At such a time the soul's a child, in childhood is the brain;
Forgotten is the worldly heart—alone, it beats in vain—
Ay, if a madman could have leave to pass a healthful day,
To tell his forehead's swoon and faint when first began
decay,

He might make tremble many a one whose spirit had gone
forth

To find a Bard's low cradle-place about the silent North!
Scanty the hour and few the steps, beyond the bourn of care,
Beyond the sweet and bitter world,—beyond it unaware!
Scanty the hour and few the steps, because a longer stay
Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal way!
O horrible! to lose the sight of well-remember'd face,
Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's brow—constant to every place,
Filling the air as on we move with portraiture intense;
More warm than those heroic tints that pain a painter's
sense,

When shapes of old come striding by, and visages of old,
Locks shining black, hair scanty grey, and passions manifold.

No, no, that horror cannot be, for at the cable's length
Man feels the gentle anchor pull, and gladdens in its
strength:—

One hour, half idiot, he stands by mossy waterfall,
But in the very next he reads his soul's memorial:—
He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance he may
sit down,

Upon rough marble diadem—that hill's eternal crown.
Yet be his anchor e'er so fast, room is there for a prayer,
That man may never lose his mind on mountains black and
bare;

That he may stray league after league some great birth-
place to find,
And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight
unblind.

(JULY, 1818)

The Gadfly

ALL gentle folks who owe a grudge
To any living thing
Open your ears and stay your trudge
Whilst I in dudgeon sing.

The Gadfly he hath stung me sore—
O may he ne'er sting you!
But we have many a horrid bore
He may sting black and blue.

Has any here an old grey Mare
With three legs all her store,
O put it to her Buttocks bare
And straight she'll run on four.

Has any here a Lawyer suit
Of 1743,
Take Lawyer's nose and put it to't
And you the end will see.

Is there a Man in Parliament
Dumbfounder'd in his speech,
O let his neighbour make a rent
And put one in his breech.

O Lowther how much better thou
Hadst figur'd t'other day
When to the folks thou mad'st a bow
And hadst no more to say,

If lucky Gadfly had but ta'en
His seat upon thine A——e
And put thee to a little pain
To save thee from a worse.

Better than Southey it had been,
Better than Mr. D——,
Better than Wordsworth too, I ween,
Better than Mr. V——.

Forgive me pray good people all
For deviating so—
In spirit sure I had a call—
And now I on will go.

Has any here a daughter fair
Too fond of reading novels,
Too apt to fall in love with care
And charming Mister Lovels.

O put a Gadfly to that thing
She keeps so white and pert—
I mean the finger for the ring,
And it will breed a wort.

Has any here a pious spouse
Who seven times a day
Scolds as King David pray'd, to chouse
And have her holy way—

O let a Gadfly's little sting
Persuade her sacred tongue
That noises are a common thing,
But that her bell has rung.

And as this is the summum bonum
Of all conquering,
I leave "withouten wordes mo"
The Gadfly's little sting.

(JULY, 1818)

*On hearing the Bagpipe and seeing
"The Stranger" played at Inverary*

OF late two dainties were before me plac'd
Sweet, holy, pure, sacred and innocent,
From the ninth sphere to me benignly sent
That Gods might know my own particular taste:
First the soft Bag-pipe mourn'd with zealous haste,
The Stranger next with head on bosom bent
Sigh'd; rueful again the piteous Bag-pipe went,
Again the Stranger sighings fresh did waste.
O Bag-pipe thou didst steal my heart away—
O Stranger thou my nerves from Pipe didst charm—
O Bag-pipe thou didst re-assert thy sway—
Again thou Stranger gav'st me fresh alarm—
Alas! I could not choose. Ah! my poor heart
Mum chance art thou with both oblig'd to part.

(JULY 18, 1818)

Staffa

NOT Aladdin magian
Ever such a work began
Not the wizard of the Dee
Ever such a dream could see;
Not St. John, in Patmos' Isle,
In the passion of his toil,
When he saw the churches seven,
Golden aisled, built up in heaven,
Gazed at such a rugged wonder.
As I stood its roofing under,
Lo! I saw one sleeping there,
On the marble cold and bare;
While the surges washed his feet,
And his garments white did beat
Drench'd about the sombre rocks;
On his neck his well-grown locks,
Lifted dry above the main
Were upon the curl again.
"What is this? and what art thou?"
Whisper'd I and touch'd his brow;
"What art thou? and what is this?"
Whisper'd I and strove to kiss
The spirit's hand, to wake his eyes.
Up he started in a trice.
"I am Lycidas," said he,
"Fam'd in funeral minstrelsy!
This was architected thus
By the great Oceanus!
Here his mighty waters play
Hollow organs all the day;
Here, by turns, his dolphins all,
Finny palmers, great and small,
Come to pay devotion due,—

Each a mouth of pearls must strew!
Many a mortal of these days,
Dares to pass our sacred ways,
Dares to touch, audaciously,
This Cathedral of the Sea!
I have been the pontiff-priest,
Where the waters never rest,
Where a fledgy sea-bird choir
Soars for ever! Holy fire
I have hid from mortal man.
Proteus is my Sacristan.
But the dulled eye of mortal
Hath pass'd beyond the rocky portal;
So for ever will I leave
Such a taint, and soon unweave
All the magic of the place.
'Tis now free to stupid face,
To cutters and to fashion-boats,
To cravats and to petticoats.
The great sea shall war it down
For its fame shall not be blown
At every farthing quadrille dance."
So saying, with a Spirit glance
He dived—

(JULY, 1818)

Written upon Ben Nevis

READ me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud
Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist!
I look into the chasms, and a shroud
Vap'rous doth hide them,—just so much I wist
Mankind do know of hell; I look o'erhead,
And there is sullen mist,—even so much
Mankind can tell of heaven; mist is spread
Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,
Even so vague is man's sight of himself!
Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet,—
Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,
I tread on them,—that all my eye doth meet
Is mist and crag, not only on this height,
But in the world of thought and mental might!

(AUGUST 2, 1818)

Ben Nevis

A Dialogue

(Persons: Mrs. Cameron and Ben Nevis)

Mrs. C.

UPON my Life Sir Nevis I am pique'd
That I have so far panted, tugg'd and reek'd
To do an honour to your old bald pate
And now am sitting on you just to bate,
Without your paying me one compliment.
Alas 'tis so with all, when our intent
Is plain, and in the eye of all Mankind
We fair ones show a preference, too blind!
You Gentle man immediately turn tail—
O let me then my hapless fate bewail!
Ungrateful Baldpate have I not disdain'd
The pleasant Valleys—have I not madbrain'd
Deserted all my Pickles and preserves
My China closet too—with wretched Nerves
To boot—say wretched ingrate have I not
Left my soft cushion chair and caudle pot.
'Tis true I had no corns—no! thank the fates
My Shoemaker was always Mr. Bates.
And if not Mr. Bates why I'm not old!
Still dumb ungrateful Nevis—still so cold!

Here the Lady took some more whiskey and was putting even more to her lips when she dashed [it] to the Ground for the Mountain began to grumble—which continued for a few minutes before he thus began,

Ben Nevis

What whining bit of tongue and Mouth thus dares
Disturb my slumber of a thousand years?

Even so long my sleep has been secure—
And to be so awaked I'll not endure.
Oh pain—for since the Eagle's earliest scream
I've had a damn'd confounded ugly dream,
A Nightmare sure. What Madam was it you?
It cannot be! My old eyes are not true!
Red-Crag, my Spectacles! Now let me see!
Good Heavens Lady how the gemini
Did you get here? O I shall split my sides!
I shall earthquake——

Mrs. C.

Sweet Nevis do not quake, for though I love
Your honest Countenance all things above
Truly I should not like to be convey'd
So far into your Bosom—gentle Maid
Loves not too rough a treatment gentle Sir—
Pray thee be calm and do not quake nor stir
No not a Stone or I shall go in fits—

Ben Nevis

I must—I shall—I meet not such tit bits—
I meet not such sweet creatures every day—
By my old night cap night cap night and day
I must have one sweet Buss—I must and shall!
Red Crag!—What Madam can you then repent
Of all the toil and vigour you have spent
To see Ben Nevis and to touch his nose?
Red Crag I say! O I must have them close!
Red Crag, there lies beneath my farthest toe
A vein of Sulphur—go dear Red Crag, go—
And rub your flinty back against it—budge!
Dear Madam I must kiss you, faith I must!
I must Embrace you with my dearest gust!
Block-head, d'ye hear—Block-head I'll make her feel,

There lies beneath my east leg's northern heel
A cave of young earth dragons—well my boy
Go thither quick and so complete my joy.
Take you a bundle of the largest pines
And when the sun on fiercest Phosphor shines
Fire them and ram them in the Dragon's nest
Then will the dragons fry and fizz their best
Until ten thousand now no bigger than
Poor Alligators—poor things of one span—
Will each one swell to twice ten times the size
Of northern whale—then for the tender prize—
The moment then—for then will Red Crag rub
His flinty back—and I shall kiss and snub
And press my dainty morsel to my breast.
Block-head make haste!

O Muses weep the rest—

The Lady fainted and he thought her dead
So pulled the clouds again about his head
And went to sleep again—soon she was rous'd
By her affrighted servants—next day hous'd
Safe on the lowly ground she bless'd her fate
That fainting fit was not delayed too late.

(AUGUST 3, 1818)

On some Skulls in Beaulieu Abbey, near Inverness

(The lines not by Keats are omitted)

IN silent barren synod met
Within these roofless walls—

The mitred ones of Nice and Trent,
Were not so tongue-tied,—no, they went
Hot to their Councils, scarce content
 With Orthodoxy;
But ye, poor tongueless things, were meant
 To speak by proxy.

Poor Skull! Thy fingers set ablaze
With silver saint in golden rays
The Holy Missal; thou didst craze
 'Mid bead and spangle,
While others passed their idle days
 In coil and wrangle.

This lily-coloured skull with all
The teeth complete, so white and small,
Belonged to one whose early pall
 A lover shaded.
He died ere Superstition's gall
 His heart invaded.

(AUGUST, 1818)

Fragment of a Sonnet

from Ronsard

NATURE withheld Cassandra in the skies
For more adornment, a full thousand years;
She took their cream of Beauty's fairest dyes,
And shaped and tinted her above all Peers:
Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,
And underneath their shadow fill'd her eyes
With such a richness that the cloudy Kings
Of high Olympus utter'd slavish sighs.
When from the Heavens I saw her first descend,
My heart took fire, and only burning pains,
They were my pleasures—they my Life's sad end;
Love pour'd her beauty into my warm veins. . . .

(SEPTEMBER, 1818)

A Prophecy

To his Brother George in America

'Tis the witching hour of night,
Orbed is the moon and bright,
And the stars they glisten, glisten,
Seeming with bright eyes to listen—
For what listen they?

For a song and for a charm.
See they glisten in alarm,
And the moon is waxing warm
To hear what I shall say.

Moon! keep wide thy golden ears—
Hearken, stars! and hearken, spheres!—
Hearken, thou eternal sky!
I sing an Infant's lullaby,
A pretty lullaby.

Listen, listen, listen, listen,
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,
And hear my lullaby!

Though the rushes that will make
Its cradle still are in the lake—
Though the linen that will be
Its swathe, is on the cotton tree—
Though the woollen that will keep
It warm, is on the silly sheep—
Listen, starlight, listen, listen,
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,
And hear my lullaby!

Child, I see thee! Child, I've found thee
Midst the quiet all around thee!
Child, I see thee! Child, I spy thee!
And thy mother sweet is nigh thee!
Child, I know thee! Child no more,

But a Poet evermore!
See, see, the Lyre, the Lyre,
In a flame of fire,
Upon the little cradle's top
Flaring, flaring, flaring,
Past the eyesight's bearing—
Awake it from its sleep,
And see if it can keep
Its eyes upon the blaze—
 Amaze, amaze!
It stares, it stares, it stares,
It dares what no one dares!
It lifts its little hand into the flame
Unharm'd, and on the strings
Paddles a little tune, and sings,
With dumb endeavour sweetly—
Bard art thou completely!
 Little child
 O' th' western wild,
Bard art thou completely!
Sweetly with dumb endeavour—
A Poet now or never!
 Little child
 O' th' western wild,
A Poet now or never!

(OCTOBER, 1818)

Where's the Poet?

WHERE'S the Poet? show him! show him,
Muses nine! that I may know him.
'Tis the man who with a man
Is an equal, be he King,
Or poorest of the beggar-clan,
Or any other wondrous thing
A man may be 'twixt ape and Plato;
'Tis the man who with a bird,
Wren, or Eagle, finds his way to
All its instincts; he hath heard
The Lion's roaring, and can tell
What his horny throat expresseth,
And to him the Tiger's yell
Comes articulate and presseth
On his ear like mother-tongue.

.

(1818)

Hyperion

BOOK I

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.

Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
 Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,
 When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
 But oh! how unlike marble was that face:
 How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun;
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
 One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck
 She laid, and to the level of his ear
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
 In solemn tenour and deep organ tone:
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
 Would come in these like accents; O how frail
 To that large utterance of the early Gods!
 "Saturn, look up!—though wherefore, poor old King?
 "I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
 "I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'
 "For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
 "Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
 "And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
 "Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air
 "Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
 "Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
 "Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
 "And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
 "Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
 "O aching time! O moments big as years!
 "All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,

“And press it so upon our weary griefs
“That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
“Saturn, sleep on:—O thoughtless, why did I
“Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
“Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
“Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep.”

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words and went; the while in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,
Just where her falling hair might be outspread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake,
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:
“O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
“Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
“Look up, and let me see our doom in it;
“Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
“Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice

"Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
 "Naked and bare of its great diadem,
 "Peers like the front of Saturn? Who had power
 "To make me desolate? whence came the strength?
 "How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,
 "While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?
 "But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
 "And buried from all godlike exercise
 "Of influence benign on planets pale,
 "Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
 "Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
 "And all those acts which Deity supreme
 "Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone
 "Away from my own bosom: I have left
 "My strong identity, my real self,
 "Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
 "Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!
 "Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
 "Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light;
 "Space region'd with life-air; and barren void;
 "Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.—
 "Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest
 "A certain shape or shadow, making way
 "With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
 "A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must
 "Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King.
 "Yes, there must be a golden victory;
 "There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
 "Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
 "Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
 "Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
 "Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
 "Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
 "Of the sky-children; I will give command:
 "Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?"

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
And made his hands to struggle in the air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep;
A little time, and then again he snatch'd
Utterance thus.—“But cannot I create?
“Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
“Another world, another universe,
“To overbear and crumble this to nought?
“Where is another chaos? Where?”—That word
Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
The rebel three.—Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.

“This cheers our fallen house: come to our friends,
“O Saturn! come away, and give them heart;
“I know the covert, for thence came I hither.”
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went
With backward footing through the shade a space:
He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe:
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;—
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up

From man to the sun's God; yet unsecure:
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he—
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright,
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angrily: while sometimes eagles' wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds were heard
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick:
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day,—
For rest divine upon exalted couch,
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His winged minions in close clusters stood,
Amaz'd and full of fear; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,

Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reach'd the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamp'd his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd,
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result: "O dreams of day and night!
"O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
"O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
"O lank-eared Phantoms of black-weeded pools!
"Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why
"Is my eternal essence thus distraught
"To see and to behold these horrors new?
"Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?
"Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
"This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,

"This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
 "These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
 "Of all my lucent empire? It is left
 "Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
 "The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,
 "I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness
 "Even here, into my centre of repose,
 "The shady visions come to domineer,
 "Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.—
 "Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
 "Over the fiery frontier of my realms
 "I will advance a terrible right arm
 "Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
 "And bid old Saturn take his throne again."—
 He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat
 Held struggle with his throat but came not forth;
 For as in theatres of crowded men
 Hubbub increases more they call out "Hush!"
 So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
 Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold;
 And from the mirror'd level where he stood
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
 At this, through all his bulk an agony
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
 Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd
 From over-strained might. Releas'd, he fled
 To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
 Before the dawn in season due should blush,
 He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
 Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
 Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
 Each day from east to west the heavens through,
 Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;

Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belted colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old,
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries:
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach:
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspread were;
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not:—No, though a primeval God:
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night
And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,
Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice

Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear:
 "O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
 "And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries
 "All unrevealed even to the powers
 "Which met at thy creating; at whose joys
 "And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
 "I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence;
 "And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
 "Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,
 "Manifestations of that beauteous life
 "Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space:
 "Of these new-form'd art thou, oh, brightest child!
 "Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!
 "There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
 "Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
 "I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!
 "To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
 "Found way from forth the thunders round his head!
 "Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.
 "Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:
 "For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
 "Divine ye were created, and divine
 "In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,
 "Unruffled, like high Gods, ye liv'd and ruled:
 "Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;
 "Actions of rage and passion; even as
 "I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
 "In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son!
 "Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!
 "Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
 "As thou canst move about, an evident God;
 "And canst oppose to each malignant hour
 "Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice;
 "My life is but the life of winds and tides,—

“No more than winds and tides can I avail:—
“But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van
“Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow’s barb
“Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth!
“For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
“Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
“And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.”—
Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
Until it ceas’d; and still he kept them wide:
And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stoop’d over the airy shore,
And plung’d all noiseless into the deep night.

BOOK II

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
 Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
 And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
 Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
 It was a den where no insulting light
 Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans
 They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
 Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
 Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
 Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd
 Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
 Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;
 And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
 Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
 Instead of thrones hard flint they sat upon,
 Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
 Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled:
 Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
 Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
 Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryion,
 With many more, the brawniest in assault,
 Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
 Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
 Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
 Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp'd and screw'd;
 Without a motion, save of their big hearts
 Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd
 With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.
 Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
 Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered;
 And many else were free to roam abroad,
 But for the main, here found they covert drear.
 Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
 Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque

Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair.
Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
Iäpetus another; in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue
Squeeze'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
Dead: and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain; for still upon the flint
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons:
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,
Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else,
Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads;
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
He meditated, plotted, and even now

Was hurling mountains in that second war,
Not long delay'd, that scar'd the younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight;
No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds:
And many else whose names may not be told.
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight? And she must chaunt
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a depth
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease:
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face:
There saw she direst strife; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain; for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison: so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house

Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise;
 So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
 Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
 But that he met Enceladus's eye,
 Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
 Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,
 "Titans, behold your God!" at which some groan'd;
 Some started on their feet; some also shouted;
 Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence;
 And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
 Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
 Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.
 There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
 When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise
 Among immortals when a God gives sign,
 With hushing finger, how he means to load
 His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,
 With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:
 Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines;
 Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
 No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,
 Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
 Grew up like organ, that begins anew
 Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
 Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
 Thus grew it up—"Not in my own sad breast,
 "Which is its own great judge and searcher out,
 "Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
 "Not in the legends of the first of days,
 "Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
 "Which starry Uranus with finger bright
 "Sav'd from the shores of darkness, when the waves
 "Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom;—
 "And the which book ye know I ever kept
 "For my firm-based footstool:—Ah, infirm!

"Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
 "Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,—
 "At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling
 "One against one, or two, or three, or all
 "Each several one against the other three,
 "As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
 "Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,
 "Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
 "Unhinges the poor world;—not in that strife,
 "Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
 "Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
 "No, no-where can unriddle, though I search,
 "And pore on Nature's universal scroll
 "Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
 "The first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods,
 "Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
 "Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
 "O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here!
 "O Titans, shall I say 'Arise!'—Ye groan:
 "Shall I say 'Crouch!'—Ye groan. What can I then?
 "O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!
 "What can I? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods.
 "How we can war, how engine our great wrath!
 "O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
 "Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
 "Ponderest high and deep; and in thy face
 "I see, astonied, that severe content
 "Which comes of thought and musing: give us help!"

So ended Saturn; and the God of the Sea,
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
 But cogitation in his watery shades,
 Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,
 In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
 Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.

"O ye, whom wrath consumes! who, passion-stung,
 "Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!
 "Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,
 "My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
 "Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
 "How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop:
 "And in the proof much comfort will I give,
 "If ye will take that comfort in its truth.
 "We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
 "Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
 "Hast sifted well the atom-universe;
 "But for this reason, that thou art the King,
 "And only blind from sheer supremacy,
 "One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
 "Through which I wandered to eternal truth.
 "And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
 "So art thou not the last; it cannot be:
 "Thou art not the beginning nor the end.
 "From chaos and parental darkness came
 "Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
 "That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
 "Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
 "And with it light, and light, engendering
 "Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
 "The whole enormous matter into life.
 "Upon that very hour, our parentage,
 "The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest:
 "Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race,
 "Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
 "Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain;
 "O folly! for to bear all naked truths,
 "And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
 "That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!
 "As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
 "Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;

"And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
 "In form and shape compact and beautiful,
 "In will, in action free, companionship,
 "And thousand other signs of purer life;
 "So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
 "A power more strong in beauty, born of us
 "And fated to excel us, as we pass
 "In glory that old Darkness: nor are we
 "Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule
 "Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
 "Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
 "And feedeth still more comely than itself?
 "Can it deny the chieftdom of green groves?
 "Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
 "Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
 "To wander wherewithal and find its joys?
 "We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
 "Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
 "But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
 "Above us in their beauty, and must reign
 "In right thereof; for 'tis eternal law
 "That first in beauty should be first in might;
 "Yea, by that law, another race may drive
 "Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
 "Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
 "My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
 "Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
 "By noble winged creatures he hath made?
 "I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
 "With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
 "That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
 "To all my empire: farewell sad I took,
 "And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
 "Had wrought upon ye; and how I might best

“Give consolation in this woe extreme.
“Receive the truth, and let it be your balm.”

Whether through poz'd conviction, or disdain,
They guarded silence, when Oceanus
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell?
But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene;
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,
Thus wording timidly among the fierce:
“O Father! I am here the simplest voice,
“And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
“And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
“There to remain for ever, as I fear:
“I would not bode of evil, if I thought
“So weak a creature could turn off the help
“Which by just right should come of mighty Gods;
“Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
“Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,
“And know that we had parted from all hope.
“I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
“Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
“Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
“Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;
“Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;
“So that I felt a movement in my heart
“To chide, and to reproach that solitude
“With songs of misery, music of our woes;
“And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell
“And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
“O melody no more! for while I sang,
“And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
“The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand

"Just opposite, an island of the sea,
"There came enchantment with the shifting wind
"That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
"I threw my shell away upon the sand,
"And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
"With that new blissful golden melody.
"A living death was in each gush of sounds,
"Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
"That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
"Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:
"And then another, then another strain,
"Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
"With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
"To hover round my head, and make me sick
"Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
"And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
"When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
"A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
"And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!
"The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!
"I fled, it follow'd me, and cried 'Apollo!
"O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
"Those pains of mine; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
"Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
"Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard."

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.

'Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
 'Or to the over-foolish, Giant-Gods?
 'Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
 'That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
 'Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,
 'Could agonize me more than baby-words
 'In midst of this dethronement horrible.
 "Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.
 "Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
 "Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
 "Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
 "Thy scalding in the seas? What! have I rous'd
 "Your spleens with so few simple words as these?
 "O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:
 "O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
 "Wide glaring for revenge!"—As this he said,
 He lifted up this stature vast, and stood,
 Still without intermission speaking thus:
 "Now ye are flames, I'll tell ye how to burn,
 "And purge the ether of our enemies;
 "How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
 "And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,
 "Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
 "O let him feel the evil he hath done;
 "For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
 "Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:
 "The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled;
 "Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
 "When all the fair Existences of heaven
 "Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:—
 "That was before our brows were taught to frown,
 "Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds;
 "That was before we knew the winged thing,
 "Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
 "And be ye mindful that Hyperion,

“Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
“Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!”

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern:
Not savage, for he saw full many a God
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old,
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams:
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion:—a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself.
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East:
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp
He utter'd, while his hands contemplative

He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day,
And many hid their faces from the light:
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood; and, at their glare,
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he towered on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name;
Hyperion from the peak loud answered, "Saturn!"
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods
Gave from their hollow throats the name of "Saturn!"

BOOK III

THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;
For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.
Flush everything that hath a vermeil hue,
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:
Apollo is once more the golden theme!
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers?
Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wandered forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,

Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.
 The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars
 Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
 Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
 There was no covert, no retired cave,
 Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,
 Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
 He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
 Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
 Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
 While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
 With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
 And there was purport in her looks for him,
 Which he with eager guess began to read
 Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said:
 "How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?
 "Or hath that antique mien and robed form
 "Mov'd in these vales invisible till now?
 "Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
 "The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
 "In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced
 "The rustle of those ample skirts about
 "These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
 "Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
 "Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
 "And their eternal calm, and all that face,
 "Or I have dream'd."—"Yes," said the supreme shape,
 "Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up
 "Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
 "Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
 "Unwearied ear of the whole universe
 "Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
 "Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange
 "That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,
 "What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad

"When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs
 "To one who in this lonely isle hath been
 "The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
 "From the young day when first thy infant hand
 "Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
 "Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
 "Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
 "Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
 "For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
 "Of loveliness newborn."—Apollo then,
 With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
 Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
 Throbb'd with the syllables.—"Mnemosyne!
 "Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;
 "Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?
 "Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
 "Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,
 "And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
 "I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
 "Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
 "And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
 "Like one who once had wings.—O why should I
 "Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air
 "Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
 "Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?
 "Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing:
 "Are there not other regions than this isle?
 "What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!
 "And the most patient brilliance of the moon!
 "And stars by thousands! Point me out the way
 "To any one particular beauteous star,
 "And I will flit into it with my lyre,
 "And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
 "I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where is power?
 "Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity

"Makes this alarum in the elements,
 "While I here idle listen on the shores
 "In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
 "O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
 "That wailleth every morn and eventide,
 "Tell me why thus I rave about these groves!
 "Mute thou remainest—Mute! yet I can read
 "A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
 "Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
 "Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
 "Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
 "Creations and destroyings, all at once
 "Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
 "And deify me, as if some blithe wine
 "Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
 "And so become immortal."—Thus the God,
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
 Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs;
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
 Or liker still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
 Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd:
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed,
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
 Her arms as one who prophesied. At length
 Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs
 Celestial

(SEPTEMBER, 1818—APRIL, 1819)

Fancy

EVER let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.
At a touch sweet pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth:
Then let winged fancy wander
Towards heaven still spread beyond her—
Open wide the mind's cage door
She'll dart forth and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy, let her loose!
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the spring
Fades as doth its blossoming:
Autumn's red-lipped fruitage too
Blushing through the mist and dew
Cloys with kissing. What do then?
Sit thee in an ingle when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the Ploughboy's heavy shoon:
When the night doth meet the noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish vesper from the sky.
Sit thee then and send abroad
With a Mind self overaw'd
Fancy high commission'd; send her,—
She'll have vassals to attend her—
She will bring thee, spite of frost,
Beauties that the Earth has lost;
She will bring thee all together
All delights of summer weather;
All the faery buds of May

On spring turf or scented spray;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth
With a still mysterious stealth;
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup
And thou shalt quaff it—Thou shalt hear
Distant harvest carols clear,
Rustle of the reaped corn
Sweet Birds antheming the Morn;
And, in the same moment hark
To the early April lark,
Or the rooks with busy caw
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt at one glance behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White plumed lillies and the first
Hedgerow primrose that hath burst;
Shaded Hyacinth alway
Sapphire Queen of the Mid-may;
And every leaf and every flower
Pearled with the same soft shower.
Thou shalt see the fieldmouse creep
Meagre from its celled sleep,
And the snake all winter shrank
Cast its skin on sunny bank;
Freckled nest eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn tree;
When the hen bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on its mossy nest—
Then the hurry and alarm
When the Beehive casts its swarm—
Acorns ripe down pattering
While the autumn breezes sing,
For the same sleek throated mouse
To store up in its winter house.

O sweet Fancy, let her loose!
Every joy is spoilt by use,
Every pleasure, every joy—
Not a Mistress but doth cloy.
Where's the cheek that doth not fade
Too much gaz'd at? Where's the Maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where's the eye however blue
Doth not weary? Where's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where's the voice however soft
One would hear too oft and oft?
At a touch sweet pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let them winged fancy find
Thee a Mistress to thy mind.
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter
Ere the God of torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide:
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's when her Zone
Slipp'd its golden clasp, and down
Fell her Kirtle to her feet
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid. Mistress fair!
Thou shalt have that tressed hair
Adonis tangled all for spite,
And the mouth he would not kiss
And the treasure he would miss;
And the hand he would not press
And the warmth he would distress.

O the Ravishment—the Bliss!
Fancy has her there she is—
Never fulsome, ever new,
There she steps! and tell me who

Has a Mistress so divine?
Be the palate ne'er so fine
She cannot sicken.

Break the Mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash
Where she's tether'd to the heart.
Quickly break her prison string
And such joys as these she'll bring.
Let the winged fancy roam
Pleasure never is at home.

(DECEMBER, 1818)

Fancy

EVER let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her:
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar,
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming;
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloyes with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overaw'd,
Fancy, high-commission'd:—send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;

All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear;
Rustle of the reaped corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment—hark!
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plum'd lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
Acorns ripe down-pattering
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Every thing is spoilt by use:
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gaz'd at? Where's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind:
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash;
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she'll bring.—
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

(Revised version)

Ode

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wond'rous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;

Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen, and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

(DECEMBER, 1818)

I had a Dove

I HAD a dove, and the sweet dove died;
And I have thought it died of grieving:
O, what could it grieve for? its feet were tied
With a silken thread of my own hand's weaving;
Sweet little red feet! why should you die—
Why should you leave me, sweet bird! why?
You liv'd alone in the forest tree,
Why, pretty thing! would you not live with me?
I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas;
Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees?

(DECEMBER, 1818)

Hush, hush! tread softly

HUSH, hush! tread softly! hush, hush my dear!

All the house is asleep, but we know very well
That the jealous, the jealous old bald-pate may hear,
Tho' you've padded his nightcap—O sweet Isabell
Tho' your feet are more light than a Faery's feet,
Who dances on bubbles where brooklets meet,—
Hush, hush! soft tiptoe! hush, hush my dear!
For less than a nothing the jealous can hear.

No leaf doth tremble, no ripple is there

On the river,—all's still, and the night's sleepy eye
Closes up, and forgets all its Lethean care,
Charm'd to death by the drone of the humming May-fly;
And the moon, whether prudish or complaisant,
Has fled to her bower, well knowing I want
No light in the dusk, no torch in the gloom,
But my Isabel's eyes, and her lips pulp'd with bloom.

Lift the latch! ah gently! ah tenderly—sweet!

We are dead if that latchet gives one little clink.
Well done!—now those lips, and a flowery seat—
The old man may sleep, and the planets may wink;
The shut rose shall dream of our loves and awake
Full-blown, and such warmth for the morning take,
The stock-dove shall hatch her soft twin-eggs and coo,
While I kiss to the melody, aching all through!

(1818)

1819

The Eve of St. Agnes

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his death bell rung,
The joys of all his life were said and sung:
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their
breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retir'd; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere;
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amorn,
Save to St. Agnes and her lamps unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things
have been.

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland.
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
"They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
"He had a fever late, and in the fit
"He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:
"Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
"More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
"Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear,
"We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
"And tell me how"—"Good saints! not here, not here;
"Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
"Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
"When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
"Yet men will murder upon holy days:
"Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
"And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays
"To venture so: it fills me with amaze
"To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
"God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
"This very night: good angels her deceive!
"But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacted she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
"Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
"Alone with her good angels, far apart
"From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
"Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
"When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
"If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
"Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
"Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
"Or I will, even in a moment's space,
"Awake, with horrid shout, my foeman's ears,
"And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves
and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
"A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
"Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
"Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
"Were never miss'd." Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies pac'd the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
"Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
"Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
"For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
"On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
"Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
"The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
"Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last
Through many a dusky galley, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No utter'd syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and
kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she
slept!

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
“And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
“Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
“Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
“Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd, “La belle dame sans mercy:”
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

“Ah, Porphyro!” said she, “but even now
“Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
“Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
“And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
“How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
“Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
“Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
“Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
“For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.”

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!"
"Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
"Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
"I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine
"Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
"A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
"Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
"Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dyed?
"Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
"After so many hours of toil and quest,
"A famish'd pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
"Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
"Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
"To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
"Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
"Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
"The bloated wassaillers will never heed;—
"Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
"There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
"Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
"Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
"For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flaggon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

(FEBRUARY, 1819)

The Eve of Saint Mark

UPON a Sabbath-day it fell;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
That call'd the folk to evening prayer;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains;
And, on the western window panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmatu'r'd green vallies cold,
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,
Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell:
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies,
Warm from their fireside orat'ries;
And moving with demurest air
To even-song and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch and entry low
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow,
With whispers hush and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceased, the prayers begun,
And Bertha had not yet half done
A curious volume patch'd and torn,
That all day long from earliest morn
Had taken captive her two eyes,
Among its golden broideries;
Perplex'd her with a thousand things,—
The stars of Heaven and angels' wings,
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,

Azure saints and silver rays,
Moses' breastplate, and the seven
Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
The winged Lion of Saint Mark,
And the Covenantal Ark,
With its many mysteries,
Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,
Dwelling in th' old Minster square;
From her fire-side she could see
Sidelong its rich antiquity,
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall;
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
Full-leav'd, the forest had outstript,
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
So shelter'd by the mighty pile.
Bertha arose and read awhile,
With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
Again she tried and then again,
Until the dusk eve left her dark
Upon the legend of St. Mark.
From pleated lawn-frill fine and thin
She lifted up her soft warm chin,
With aching neck and swimming eyes,
And dazed with saintly imageries.

All was gloom, and silent all
Save now and then the still footfall
Of one returning homewards late,
Past the echoing minster-gate.
The clamorous daws that all the day
Above tree-tops and towers play,
Pair by pair had gone to rest,
Each in its ancient belfry-nest,

Where asleep they fall betimes
To music of the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
Abroad and in the homely room:
Down she sat, poor cheated soul,
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal;
Leaned forward, with bright drooping hair,
And slant book full against the glare.
Her shadow in uneasy guise
Hover'd about a giant size
On ceiling-beam and old oak chair,
The parrot's cage and panel square;
And the warm angled winter-screen,
On which were many monsters seen,
Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
And legless birds of Paradise,
Macaw, and tender Avadavat,
And silken-furr'd Angora cat.
Untir'd she read, her shadow still
Glower'd about, as it would fill
The room with wildest forms and shades,
As though some ghostly queens of spades
Had come to mock behind her back,
And dance, and ruffle her garments black.
Untir'd she read the legend page,
Of holy Mark, from youth to age,
On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
Rejoicing for his many pains.
Sometimes the learned eremite,
With golden star, or dagger bright,
Referr'd to pious poesies
Written in smallest crow-quill size
Beneath the text; and thus the rhyme
Was parcell'd out from time to time:

——“Als writith he of swevenis,
Men han beforne they wake in bliss,
Whanne that hir friendes thinke hem bound
In crimped shroude farre under grounde;
And how a litling child mote be
A saint er its nativite,
Gif that the modre (God her blesse!)
Kepen in solitarinesse,
And kissen devoute the holy croce.
Of Goddes love, and Sathan's force,—
He writith; and thinges many mo
Of swiche thinges I may not shew.
Bot I must tellen verilie
Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,
And chieflie what he auctorethe
Of Saintè Markis life and dethe:”

At length her constant eyelids come
Upon the fervent martyrdom;
Then lastly to his holy shrine,
Exalt amid the tapers' shine
At Venice,—

(FEBRUARY 13-17, 1819)

Why did I laugh to-night?

WHY did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell:
No God, no Demon of severe response,
Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell.
Then to my human heart I turn at once.
Heart! Thou and I are here, sad and alone;
I say, why did I laugh? O mortal pain!
O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan,
To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain.
Why did I laugh? I know this Being's lease,
My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads;
Yet would I on this very midnight cease,
And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds;
Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,
But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed.

(MARCH, 1819)

On a Dream

After reading Dante's Episode of Paolo and Francesca

As Hermes once took to his feathers light,
When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept,
So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright,
So play'd, so charm'd, so conquer'd, so bereft
The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes,
And seeing it asleep, so fled away,
Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
Nor unto Tempe, where Jove grieved a day;
But to that second circle of sad Hell,
Where in the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell
Their sorrows,—pale were the sweet lips I saw,
Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
I floated with, about that melancholy storm.

(APRIL, 1819)

Bright Star!

BRIGHT Star! would I were steadfast as thou art!
Not in lone splendour hung amid the night;
Not watching, with eternal lids apart
Like Nature's devout sleepless Eremite
The morning waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores;
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors:—
No;—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable
Cheek-pillow'd on my Love's white ripening breast,
To touch, for ever, its warm sink and swell,
Awake, for ever, in a sweet unrest;
To hear, to feel her tender-taken breath,
Half-passionless, and so swoon on to death.

(APRIL, 1819)

An Extempore

WHEN they were come into the Faery's Court
They rang—no one at home—all gone to sport
And dance and kiss and love as faerys do
For Faries be as human lovers true—
Amid the woods they were so lone and wild
Where even the Robin feels himself exil'd
And where the very brooks as if afraid
Hurry alone to some less magic shade.
“No one at home”! the fretful princess cry'd
“And all for nothing such a dreary ride
And all for nothing my new diamond cross
No one to see my Persian feathers toss
No one to see my Ape, my Dwarf, my Fool
Or how I pace my Otaheitan mule.
Ape, Dwarf and Fool why stand you gaping there
Burst the door open, quick—or I declare
I'll switch you soundly and in pieces tear.”
The Dwarf began to tremble and the Ape
Star'd at the Fool, the Fool was all agape
The Princess grasp'd her switch but just in time
The dwarf with piteous face began to rhyme.
“O mighty Princess did you ne'er hear tell
What your poor servants know but too too well
Know you the three great crimes in faery land?
The first alas! poor Dwarf I understand
I made a whipstock of a faery's wand
The next is snoring in their company
The next the last the direst of the three
Is making free when they are not at home.
I was a Prince—a baby prince—my doom
You see, I made a whipstock of a wand
My top has henceforth slept in faery land.

He was a Prince the Fool, a grown up Prince
But he has never been a King's son since
He fell a snoring at a faery Ball—
Your poor Ape was a prince and he poor thing
Picklock'd a faery's boudour—now no king
But ape—so pray your highness stay awhile
'Tis sooth indeed we know it to our sorrow—
Persist and *you* may be an ape tomorrow—”
While the Dwarf spake the Princess all for spite
Peal'd the brown hazel twig to lilly white
Clench'd her small teeth, and held her lips apart
Try'd to look unconcern'd with beating heart.
They saw her highness had made up her mind
And quaver'd like the reeds before the wind
And they had had it, but O happy chance
The Ape for very fear began to dance
And grin'd as all his ugliness did ache—
She staid her vixen fingers for his sake
He was so very ugly: then she took
Her pocket mirror and began to look
First at her self and [then] at him and then
She smil'd at her own beauteous face again.
Yet for all this—for all her pretty face
She took it in her head to see the place.
Women gain little from experience
Either in Lovers, husbands or expense.
The more the beauty the more fortune too
Beauty before the wide world never knew.
So each fair reasons—tho' it oft miscarries.
She thought *her* pretty face would please the faries.
“My darling Ape I wont whip you today.
Give me the Picklock sirrah and go play.”
They all three wept—but counsel was as vain
As crying cup biddy to drops of rain.
Yet lingeringly did the sad Ape forth draw

The Picklock from the Pocket in his Jaw.
The Princess took it and dismounting straight
Trip'd in blue silver'd slippers to the gate
And touch'd the wards, the Door full cou[r]teous[s]ly
Opened—she enter'd with her servants three.
Again it clos'd and there was nothing seen
But the Mule grasing on the herbage green.

End of Canto XII

Canto the XIII

The Mule no sooner saw himself alone
Than he prick'd up his Ears—and said “well done
At least unhappy Prince I may be free—
No more a Princess shall side saddle me
O King of Othaietè—tho' a Mule
'Aye every inch a King'—tho' 'Fortune's fool'
Well done—for by what Mr. Dwarfy said
I would not give a sixpence for her head.”
Even as he spake he trotted in high glee
To the knotty side of an old Pollard tree
And rub[']d his sides against the mossed bark
Till his Girths burst and left him naked stark
Except his Bridle—how get rid of that,
Buckled and tied with many a twist and plait.
At last it struck him to pretend to sleep
And then the thievish Monkeys down would creep
And filch the unpleasant trammels quite away.
No sooner thought of than adown he lay
Sham'd a good snore—the Monkey-man descended
And whom they thought to injure they befriended.
They hung his Bridle on a topmost bough
And of[f] he went run, trot, or anyhow—

(APRIL, 1819)

On Charles Armitage Brown

HE is to weet a melancholy carle:
Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair,
As hath the seeded thistle when in parle
It holds the Zephyr, ere it sendeth fair
Its light balloons into the summer air;
Therto his beard had not begun to bloom,
No brush had touch'd his chin or razor sheer;
No care had touch'd his cheek with mortal doom,
But new he was and bright as scarf from Persian loom.

Ne cared he for wine, or half-and-half,
Ne cared he for fish or flesh or fowl,
And sauces held he worthless as the chaff;
He 'sdeigned the swine-herd at the wassail-bowl;
Ne with lewd ribbalds sat he cheek by jowl;
Ne with sly Lemans in the scorner's chair;
But after water-brooks this Pilgrim's soul
Panted, and all his food was woodland air
Though he would oftentimes feast on gilliflowers rare.

The slang of cities in no wise he knew,
Tipping the wink to him was heathen Greek;
He sipp'd no olden Tom or ruin blue,
Or nantz or cherry-brandey drank full meek
By many a Damsel hoarse and rouge of cheek;
Nor did he know each aged watchman's beat,
Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek
For curled Jewesses, with ankles neat,
Who as they walk abroad make tinkling with their feet.

(APRIL, 1819)

Two or three Posies . . .

O there is nothing like fine weather, and health, and Books, and a fine country, and a contented Mind, and diligent habit of reading and thinking, and an amulet against the ennui—and, please heaven, a little claret wine cool out of a cellar a mile deep—with a few or a good many ratafia cakes—a rocky basin to bathe in, a strawberry bed to say your prayers to Flora in, a pad nag to go you ten miles or so; two or three sensible people to chat with; two or three spiteful folkes to spar with; two or three odd fishes to laugh at and two or three numskul[!]'s to argue with—instead of using dumb bells on a rainy day—

Two or three Posies
With two or three simples—
Two or three Noses
With two or three pimples—
Two or three wise men
And two or three ninny's—
Two or three purses
And two or three guineas—
Two or three raps
At two or three doors—
Two or three naps
Of two or three hours—
Two or three Cats
And two or three mice—
Two or three sprats
At a very great price—
Two or three sandies
And two or three tabbies—
Two or three dandies
And two Mrs —— mum!
Two or three Smiles

And two or three frowns—
Two or three Miles
To two or three towns—
Two or three pegs
For two or three bonnets—
Two or three dove eggs
To hatch into sonnets—

Good bye I've an appointment—can't stop pon word
good bye—now don't get up—open the door myself—good
bye—see ye Monday.

J. K.

(APRIL, 1819)

La belle Dame sans merci

(First version)

O WHAT can ail thee Knight at arms
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge is withered from the Lake
And no birds sing!

O what can ail thee Knight at arms
So haggard and so woe begone?
The squirrel's granary is full
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too—

I met a Lady in the Meads
Full beautiful, a faery's child
Her hair was long, her foot was light
And her eyes were wild—

I made a Garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant Zone
She look'd at me as she did love
And made sweet moan—

I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long
For sidelong would she bend and sing
A faery's song—

La belle Dame sans merci

(Second version)

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering;
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lilly on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful, a fairy's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

She found me roots of relish sweet
And honey wild and manna dew
And sure in language strange she said
I love thee true—

She took me to her elfin grot
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four—

And there she lulled me asleep
And there I dream'd Ah Woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale Kings, and Princes too
Pale warriors death pale were they all
Who cried La belle dame sans merci
Thee hath in thrall.

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering;
Though the sedge is withered from the Lake
And no birds sing—

(APRIL, 1819)

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said,
I love thee true.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gaz'd and sighed deep,
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—
So kiss'd to sleep.

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd, ah woe betide
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cry'd—"La belle Dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloom
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill side.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Chorus of four Fairies

Fire, Air, Earth, and Water,

Salamander, Zephyr, Dusketha, and Breama.

Salamander. Happy, happy, glowing fire!

Zephyr. Fragrant air! delicious light!

Dusketha. Let me to my glooms retire!

Breama. I to green-weed rivers bright!

Salamander. Happy, happy, glowing fire!

Dazzling bowers of soft retire,

Ever let my nourish'd wing,

Like a bat's, still wandering,

Faintless fan your fiery spaces,

Spirit sole in deadly places.

In unhaunted roar and blaze,

Open eyes that never daze,

Let me see the myriad shapes

Of men, and beasts, and fish, and apes,

Portray'd in many a fiery den,

And wrought by spumy bitumen

On the deep intenser roof,

Arched every way aloof.

Let me breathe upon their skies,

And anger their live tapestries;

Free from cold, and every care

Of chilly rain and shivering air.

Zephyr. Spright of Fire! away! away!

Or your very roundelay

Will sear my plumage newly budded

From its quilled sheath, all studded

With the self-same dews that fell

On the May-grown Asphodel.

Spright of Fire—away! away!

Breama. Spright of Fire—away! away!
Zephyr, blue-eyed faery, turn,
And see my cool sedge-shaded urn,
Where it rests its mossy brim
'Mid water-mint and cresses dim;
And the flowers, in sweet troubles,
Lift their eyes above the bubbles,
Like our Queen, when she would please
To sleep and Oberon will tease—
Love me, blue-eyed Faery, true.
Soothly I am sick for you.

Zephyr. Gentle Breama! by the first
Violet young nature nurst,
I will bathe myself with thee,
So you sometimes follow me
To my home, far, far in west,
Beyond the nimble-wheeled quest
Of the golden-browed sun,
When his arched course is run.
Come with me, o'er tops of trees,
To my fragrant palaces,
Where they ever floating are
Beneath the cherish of a star
Call'd Vesper, who with silver veil
Ever hides his brilliance pale,
Ever gently-drows'd doth keep
Twilight for the Fays to sleep,
Fear not that your watery hair
Will thirst in drouthy ringlets there;
Clouds of stored summer rains
Thou shalt taste, before the stains
Of the mountain soil they take,
And too unlucent for thee make.
I love thee, crystal Fairy, true!
Sooth I am as sick for you!

Salamander. Out, ye aguish Fairies, out.
 Chilly lovers, what a rout
 Keep ye with your frozen breath,
 Colder than the mortal death!
 Adder-eyed Dusketha, speak!
 Shall we leave these, and go seek
 In the earth's wide entrails old
 Couches warm as theirs are cold?
 O for a fiery gloom and thee,
 Dusketha, so enchantingly
 Freckle-wing'd and lizard-sided!

Dusketha. By thee, Spright, will I be guided!
 I care not for cold or heat:
 Frost and flame, or sparks, or sleet,
 To my essence are the same;—
 But I honour more the flame.
 Spright of Fire, I follow thee
 Wheresoever it may be,—
 To the torrid spouts and fountains,
 Underneath earth-quaked mountains:
 Or, at thy supreme desire,
 Touch the very pulse of fire
 With my bare unlidded eyes.

Salamander. Sweet Dusketha! paradise!
 Off, ye icy Spirits, fly!
 Frosty creatures of the sky.

Dusketha. Breathe upon them, fiery spright!

Zephyr. } Away! away to our delight!

Breama. }

Salamander. Go, feed on icicles, while we
 Bedded in tongue-flames will be.

Dusketha. Lead me to those feverous glooms,
 Spright of Fire!

Breama. Me to the blooms,
 Blue-eyed Zephyr, of those flowers

Far in the west where the May-cloud lowers;
And the beams of still Vesper, when winds are
 all wist,
Are shed through the rain and the milder
 mist,
And twilight your floating bowers. . . .

(APRIL, 1819)

On Fame

FAME, like a wayward girl, will still be coy
To those who woo her with too slavish knees,
But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy,
And does the more upon a heart at ease;
She is a Gipsey, will not speak to those
Who have not learnt to be content without her;
A Jilt, whose ear was never whisper'd close,
Who thinks they scandal her who talk about her;
A very Gipsey is she, Nilus-born,
Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar;
Ye love-sick Bards! repay her scorn for scorn;
Ye Artists lovelorn! madmen that ye are!
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

(APRIL, 1819)

Ode to Psyche

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
Even into thine own soft-conched ear:
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied:
'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love:
The winged boy I knew;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

O latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;

No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
Yet even in these days so far retir'd
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swung censer teeming;
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:

And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in!

(APRIL, 1819)

To Sleep

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight!
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes.
Or wait the Amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities;
Then save me, or the passed day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that still hoards
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

(APRIL, 1819)

On Fame

"You cannot eat your cake and have it too."—Proverb.

How fever'd is the man, who cannot look
Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,
Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,
And robs his fair name of its maidenhood;
It is as if the rose should pluck herself,
Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,
As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,
Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom;
But the rose leaves herself upon the briar,
For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed,
And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire;
The undisturbed lake has crystal space;
Why then should man, teasing the world for grace,
Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?

(APRIL 30, 1819)

On the Sonnet

If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness;
Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,
Sandals more interwoven and complete
To fit the naked foot of poesy;
Let us inspect the lyre, and weigh the stress
Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd
By ear industrious, and attention meet;
Misers of sound and syllable, no less
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown;
So, if we may not let the Muse be free,
She will be bound with garlands of her own.

(MAY, 1819)

Ode on Melancholy

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

(MAY, 1819)

Ode to a Nightingale

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singing of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage, that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf,
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

(MAY, 1819)

Ode on a Grecian Urn

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness!
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth, beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

(MAY, 1819)

Ode on Indolence

"They toil not, neither do they spin."

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,
With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-faced;
And one behind the other stepp'd serene,
In placid sandals, and in white robes graced;
They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,
When shifted round to see the other side;
They came again; as when the urn once more
Is shifted round, the first seen shades return;
And they were strange to me, as may betide
With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

How is it, Shadows! that I knew ye not?
How came ye muffled in so hush a mask?
Was it a silent deep-disguised plot
To steal away, and leave without a task
My idle days? Ripe was the drowsy hour;
The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
Benumb'd my eyes; my pulse grew less and less;
Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower:
O, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense
Unhaunted quite of all but—nothingness?

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing, turn'd
Each one the face a moment whiles to me;
Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd
And ached for wings, because I knew the three;
The first was a fair Maid, and Love her name;
The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,
And ever watchful with fatigued eye;
The last, whom I love more, the more of blame
Is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek,—
I knew to be my demon Poesy.

They faded, and, forsooth! I wanted wings:
O folly! What is Love? and where is it?
And for that poor Ambition! it springs
From a man's little heart's short fever-fit;
For Poesy!—no,—she has not a joy,—
At least for me,—so sweet as drowsy noons,
And evenings steep'd in honied indolence;
O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
That I may never know how change the moons,
Or hear the voice of busy common-sense!

And once more came they by;—alas! wherefore?
My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams;
My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er
With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams:
The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May;
The open casement press'd a new-leaved vine,
Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay;
O Shadows! 'twas a time to bid farewell!
Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine.

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu! Ye cannot raise
My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass;
For I would not be dieted with praise,
A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!
Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more
In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn;
Farewell! I yet have visions for the night,
And for the day faint visions there is store;
Vanish, ye Phantoms! from my idle spright,
Into the clouds, and never more return!

(MAY OR JUNE, 1819)

Lamia

PART I

UPON a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslip'd lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warn on amorous theft:
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons pour'd
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometimes she might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose.
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.
From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
And wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepar'd her secret bed:
In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,

And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,
Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
All pain but pity: thus the lone voice spake:
"When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake!
"When move in a sweet body fit for life,
"And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife
"Of hearts and lips? Ah, miserable me!"
The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed
The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,
Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—
So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elf,
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete:
And for her eyes—what could such eyes do there
But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair?
As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.
Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake,

And thus; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey.

"Fair Hermes! crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,
"I had a splendid dream of thee last night:
"I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,
"Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
"The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
"The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chanting clear,
"Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
"Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan.
"I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
"Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,
"And swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
"Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou art!
"Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid?"
Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:
"Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high inspired!
"Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,
"Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
"Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—
"Where she doth breathe!" "Bright planet, thou hast said,"
Return'd the snake, "but seal with oaths, fair God!"
"I swear," said Hermes, "by my serpent rod,
"And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown!"
Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.
Then thus again the brilliance feminine:
"Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of thine,
"Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
"About these thornless wilds; her pleasant days
"She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet
"Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet;
"From weary tendrils and bow'd branches green
"She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen:

"And by my power is her beauty veil'd
 "To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd
 "By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
 "Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.
 "Pale grew her immortality, for woe
 "Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
 "I took compassion on her, bade her steep
 "Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep
 "Her loveliness invisible, yet free
 "To wander as she loves, in liberty.
 "Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone,
 "If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon!"
 Then, once again, the charmed God began
 An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran
 Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.
 Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,
 Blush'd a live damask and swift-lisping said,
 "I was a woman, let me have once more
 "A woman's shape, and charming as before.
 "I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!
 "Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.
 "Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
 "And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now."
 The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
 She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was seen
 Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.
 It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
 Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
 Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
 One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem
 Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd;
 Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd
 To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,
 Delicate, put to proof the lythe Caducean charm.
 So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent

Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
And towards her stept: she, like a moon in wane,
Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour:
But the God fostering her chilled hand,
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,
And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear,
Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling
tear.

The colours all inflam'd throughout her train,
She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain:
A deep volcanian yellow took the place,
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede;
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars:
So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,
Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
Still shone her crown; that vanish'd, also she
Melted and disappear'd as suddenly;
And in the air, her new voice luting soft,

Cried, "Lycius! gentle Lycius!"—Borne aloft
With the bright mists about the mountains hoar
These words dissolv'd: Crete's forests heard no more.

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
A full-born beauty new and exquisite?
She fled into that valley they pass o'er
Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore;
And rested at the foot of those wild hills,
The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
And of that other ridge whose barren back
Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
South-westward to Cleone. There she stood,
About a young bird's flutter from a wood,
Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
By a clear pool, where in she passioned
To see herself escap'd from so sore ills,
While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius!—for she was a maid
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring flowered lea
Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy:
A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's core:
Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain;
Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counterchange;
Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart
Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art;
As though in Cupid's college she had spent
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,
And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairly
By the wayside to linger, we shall see;
But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse
And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
Of all she list, strange or magnificent:
How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went;
Whether to faint Elysium, or where
Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair
Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair;
Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine;
Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.
And sometimes into cities she would send
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;
And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,
She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
Charioting foremost in the envious race,
Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,
And fell into a swooning love of him.
Now on the moth-time of that evening dim
He would return that way, as well she knew,
To Corinth from the shore; for freshly blew
The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
Grated the quaystones with her brazen prow
In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle
Fresh anchor'd; whither he had been awhile
To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.
Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire;
For by some freakful chance he made retire
From his companions, and set forth to walk,
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk:
Over the solitary hills he fared,
Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appeared

His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
 In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.
 Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—
 Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
 His silent sandals swept the mossy green;
 So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen
 She stood: he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
 His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes
 Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white
 Turn'd—syllabbling thus: "Ah, Lycius bright,
 "And will you leave me on the hills alone?
 "Lycius, look back! and be some pity shown."
 He did; not with cold wonder fearingly,
 But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice;
 For so delicious were the words she sung
 It seem'd he had lov'd them a whole summer long:
 And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
 Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
 And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid
 Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid
 Due adoration, thus began to adore;
 Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure.
 "Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, Goddess, see
 "Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!
 "For pity do not this sad heart belie—
 "Even as thou vanishest so I shall die.
 "Stay! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay!
 "To thy far wishes will thy streams obey:
 "Stay! though the greenest woods be thy domain,
 "Alone they can drink up the morning rain:
 "Though a descended Pleiad, will not one
 "Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
 "Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine?
 "So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine
 "Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade

"Thy memory will waste me to a shade:—
 "For pity do not melt!"—"If I should stay,"
 Said Lamia, "here, upon this floor of clay,
 "And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,
 "What canst thou say or do of charm enough
 "To dull the nice remembrance of my home?
 "Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
 "Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—
 "Empty of immortality and bliss!
 "Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
 "That finer spirits cannot breathe below
 "In human climes, and live: Alas! poor youth,
 "What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
 "My essence! What serener palaces,
 "Where I may all my many senses please
 "And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease?
 "It cannot be—Adieu!" So said, she rose
 Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose
 The amorous promise of her lone complain,
 Swoon'd, murmuring of love, and pale with pain.
 The cruel lady, without any show
 Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
 But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
 With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
 Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
 The life she had so tangled in her mesh:
 And as he from one trance was wakening
 Into another, she began to sing,
 Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,
 A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
 While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting fires.
 And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone,
 As those who, safe together met alone
 For the first time through many anguish'd days,
 Use other speech than looks; bidding him raise

His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,
For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss
Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
She dwelt but half retir'd, and there had led
Days happy as the gold coin could invent
Without the aid of love; yet in content
Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,
Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully
At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd
Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before
The Adonian feast; whereof she saw no more,
But wept alone those days,—for why should she adore?
Lycius from death awoke into amaze
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays;
Then from amaze into delight he fell
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well;
And every word she spake entic'd him on
To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
There is not such a treat among them all,
Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
As a real woman, lineal indeed
From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
Thus gentle Lamia judg'd, and judg'd aright,
That Lycius could not love in half a fright,
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
With no more awe than what her beauty gave,
That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.

Lycius to all made eloquent reply,
Marrying to every word a twinborn sigh;
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,
If 'twas too far that night for her soft feet.
The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease
To a few paces; not at all surmised
By blinded Lycius, so in her comprized.
They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours,
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
Companion'd or alone; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,
And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
Or found them cluster'd in the corniced shade
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,
Her finger he press'd hard, as one came near
With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald crown,
Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown:
Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
While hurried Lamia trembled: "Ah," said he,
"Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
"Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew?"—
"I'm wearied," said fair Lamia: "tell me who
"Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind

“His features:—Lycius! wherefore did you blind
“Yourself from his quick eyes?” Lycius replied,
“Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
“And good instructor; but to-night he seems
“The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams.”

While yet he spake they had arrived before
A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
Mild as a star in water; for so new,
And so unsullied was the marble hue,
So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine
Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian
Breath'd from the hinges, as the ample span
Of the wide doors disclos'd a place unknown
Some time to any, but those two alone,
And a few Persian mutes, who that same year
Were seen about the markets: none knew where
They could inhabit; the most curious
Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house:
And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,
For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befell.
'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus
Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

PART II

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is—Love, forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust;
Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit's fast:—
That is a doubtful tale from faery land,
Hard for the non-elect to understand.
Had Lycius liv'd to hand his story down,
He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
Or clench'd it quite: but too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss
Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
Above the lintel of their chamber door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor.

For all this came a ruin: side by side
They were enthroned, in the even tide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear
Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
Betwixt two marble shafts:—there they reposed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
Saving a tythe which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they almost slept;
When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill
Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds fled,
But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.
For the first time, since first he harbour'd in
That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.

The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
 Saw this with pain, so arguing a want
 Of something more, more than her empery
 Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
 Because he mused beyond her, knowing well
 That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.
 "Why do you sigh, fair creature?" whisper'd he:
 "Why do you think?" return'd she tenderly:
 "You have deserted me;—where am I now?
 "Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:
 "No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go
 "From your breast houseless: ay, it must be so."
 He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
 Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,—
 "My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
 "Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
 "While I am striving how to fill my heart
 "With deeper crimson, and a double smart?
 "How to entangle, trammel up and snare
 "Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there,
 "Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?
 "Ay, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes.
 "My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!
 "What mortal hath a prize, that other men
 "May be confounded and abash'd withal,
 "But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,
 "And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice
 "Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
 "Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
 "While through the thronged streets your bridal car
 "Wheels round its dazzling spokes."—The lady's cheek
 Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,
 Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
 Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain
 Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,

To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,
 Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim
 Her wild and timid nature to his aim:
 Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
 Against his better self, he took delight
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
 His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
 Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible
 In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
 Fine was the mitigated fury, like
 Apollo's presence when in act to strike
 The serpent—Ha, the serpent! certes, she
 Was none. She burnt, she lov'd the tyranny,
 And, all subdued, consented to the hour
 When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.
 Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,
 "Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth,
 "I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee
 "Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
 "As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
 "Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?
 "Or friends or kinsfolk on the citied earth,
 "To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth?"
 "I have no friends," said Lamia, "no, not one;
 "My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:
 "My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
 "Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,
 "Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,
 "And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
 "Even as you list invite your many guests;
 "But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
 "With any pleasure on me, do not bid
 "Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid."
 Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,
 Made close inquiry; from whose touch she shrank,

Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

It was the custom then to bring away
The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along
By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,
With other pageants: but this fair unknown
Had not a friend. So being left alone
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin)
And knowing surely she could never win
His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress
The misery in fit magnificence.
She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence
Came and who were her subtle servitors.
About the halls, and to and from the doors,
There was a noise of wings, till in short space
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace;
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
High in the midst, in honour of the bride:
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,
From either side their stems branch'd one to one
All down the aisled place; and beneath all
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall.
So canopied, lay an untasted feast
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
Silently paced about, and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent,
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.

Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,
Came jasper pannels; then anon there burst
Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees,
And with the larger wove in small intricacies.
Approving all, she faded at self-will,
And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,
Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreadful guests would come to spoil her solitude.

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.
O senseless Lycius! Madman! wherefore flout
The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,
And show to common eyes these secret bowers?
The herd approach'd; each guest, with busy brain,
Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,
And enter'd marveling: for they knew the street,
Remember'd it from childhood all complete
Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne;
So in they hurried all, maz'd, curious and keen:
Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,
And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere;
'Twas Apollonius: something too he laugh'd,
As though some knotty problem, that had daft
His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,
And solve and melt:—'twas just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
His young disciple. "'Tis no common rule,
'Lycius," said he, "for uninvited guest
"To force himself upon you, and infest
"With an unbidden presence the bright throng
"Of younger friends; yet must I do this wrong,
"And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd, and led
The old man through the inner doors broad-spread;

With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume:
Before each lucid pannel fuming stood
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerv'd upon the soft
Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of smoke
From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose
Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odorous.
Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats insphered,
High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
Came from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a God.

When in an antichamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,
By minist'ring slaves, upon his hands and feet,
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Pour'd on his hair, they all mov'd to the feast
In white robes, and themselves in order placed
Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a vowel'd under-song
Kept up among the guests, discoursing low
At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow;

But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,
Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
Of powerful instruments:—the gorgeous dyes,
The space, the splendour of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed
And every soul from human trammels freed,
No more so strange; for merry wine, sweet wine,
Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.
Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height;
Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright:
Garlands of every green, and every scent
From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,
In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought
High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought
Of every guest; that each, as he did please.
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease.

What wreath for Lamia? What for Lycius?
What for the sage, old Apollonius?
Upon her aching forehead be there hung
The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue;
And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him
The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim
Into forgetfulness; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—

Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
Scarce saw in all the room another face,
Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took
Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look
'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,
And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher
Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or a stir,
Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.
Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,
As pale it lay upon the rosy couch:
'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins;
Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.
"Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost thou start?
"Know'st thou that man?" Poor Lamia answer'd not.
He gaz'd into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gaz'd: his human senses reel:
Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs;
There was no recognition in those orbs.
"Lamia!" he cried—and no soft-toned reply.
The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush; the stately music no more breathes;
The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased;
A deadly silence step by step increased
Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.
"Lamia!" he shriek'd; and nothing but the shriek
With its sad echo did the silence break.

"Begone, foul dream!" he cried, gazing again
 In the bride's face, where now no azure vein
 Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft bloom
 Misted the cheek; no passion to illumine
 The deep-recessed vision:—all was blight;
 Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.
 "Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man!
 "Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous ban
 "Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
 "Here represent their shadowy presences,
 "May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn
 "Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,
 "In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
 "Of conscience, for their long offended might,
 "For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,
 "Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
 "Corinthians! look upon that gray-beard wretch!
 "Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch
 "Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
 "My sweet bride withers at their potency."
 "Fool!" said the sophist, in an under-tone
 Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan
 From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,
 He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
 "Fool! Fool!" repeated he, while his eyes still
 Relented not, nor mov'd; "from every ill
 "Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,
 "And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?"
 Then Lamia breath'd death breath; the sophist's eye,
 Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
 Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging: she, as well
 As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
 Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,
 He look'd and look'd again a level—No!
 "A Serpent!" echoed he; no sooner said,

Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
On the high couch he lay!—his friends came round—
Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found,
And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.*

* "Philostratus, in his fourth book *de Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him; but she, being fair and lovely, would live and die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her a while to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance, but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant: many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece."—BURTON'S "Anatomy of Melancholy." *Part 3. Sect. 2. Memb. I. Subs. I.*

(JULY—AUGUST, 1819)

The Fall of Hyperion

A Dream

CANTO I

FANATICS have their dreams, wherewith they weave
A paradise for a sect; the savage, too,
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
Guesses at heaven; pity these have not
Trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf
The shadows of melodious utterance.
But bare of laurel they live, dream and die;
For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,—
With the fine spell of words alone can save
Imagination from the sable chain
And dumb enchantment—Who alive can say,
“Thou art no Poet—mayst not tell thy dreams?”
Since every man whose soul is not a clod
Hath visions, and would speak, if he had lov'd,
And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.
Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse
Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the grave.

Methought I stood where trees of every clime,
Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech,
With plantane, and spice-blossoms, made a screen;
In neighbourhood of fountains, by the noise
Soft-showering in mine ears; and by the touch
Of scent, not far from roses. Turning round
I saw an arbour with a drooping roof
Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,
Like floral censers swinging light in air;
Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound
Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits,
Which, nearer seen, seem'd refuse of a meal
By angel tasted or our Mother Eve;

For empty shells were scatter'd on the grass,
And grape-stalks but half bare, and remnants more
Sweet smelling, whose pure kinds I could not know.
Still was more plenty than the fabled horn
Thrice emptied could pour forth, at banqueting
For Proserpine return'd to her own fields,
Where the white heifers low. And appetite,
More yearning than on earth I ever felt,
Growing within, I ate deliciously;
And, after not long, thirsted; for thereby
Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice,
Sipp'd by the wander'd bee, the which I took,
And, pledging all the mortals of the world,
And all the dead whose names are in our lips,
Drank. That full draught is parent of my theme.
No Asian poppy nor elixir fine
Of the soon-fading jealous Caliphat,
No poison gender'd in close monkish cell,
To thin the scarlet conclave of old men,
Could so have rapt unwilling life away.
Among the fragrant husks and berries crush'd,
Upon the grass I struggled hard against
The domineering potion; but in vain.
The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sunk,
Like a Silenus on an antique vase.
How long I slumber'd 'tis a chance to guess
When sense of life return'd, I started up
As if with wings; but the fair trees were gone,
The mossy mound and arbour were no more:
I look'd around upon the carved sides
Of an old sanctuary with roof august,
Builted so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds
Might spread beneath, as o'er the stars of heaven;
So old the place was, I remember'd none
The like upon the earth: what I had seen

Of gray cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers,
The superannuations of sunk realms,
Or Nature's rocks toil'd hard in waves and winds,
Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things
To that eternal domed monument.

Upon the marble at my feet there lay
Store of strange vessels, and large draperies,
Which needs had been of dyed asbestos wove,
Or in that place the moth could not corrupt,
So white the linen; so, in some, distinct
Ran imageries from a sombre loom.
All in a mingled heap confus'd there lay
Robes, golden tongs, censer, and chafing-dish,
Girdles, and chains, and holy jewelries.

Turning from these with awe, once more I rais'd
My eyes to fathom the space every way;
The embossed roof, the silent massy range
Of columns north and south, ending in mist
Of nothing; then to eastward, where black gates
Were shut against the sunrise evermore.
Then to the west I look'd, and saw far off
An image, huge of feature as a cloud,
At level of whose feet an altar slept,
To be approach'd on either side by steps,
And marble balustrade, and patient travail
To count with toil the innumerable degrees.
Towards the altar sober-pac'd I went,
Repressing haste, as too unholy there;
And, coming nearer, saw beside the shrine
One minist'ring; and there arose a flame.
When in mid-way the sickening east-wind
Shifts sudden to the south, the small warm rain
Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,
And fills the air with so much pleasant health
That even the dying man forgets his shroud;—

Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,
Sending forth Maian incense, spread around
Forgetfulness of everything but bliss,
And clouded all the altar with soft smoke;
From whose white fragrant curtains thus I heard
Language pronounc'd: "If thou canst not ascend
These steps, die on that marble where thou art.
Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
Will parch for lack of nutriment,—thy bones
Will wither in few years, and vanish so
That not the quickest eye could find a grain
Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.
The sands of thy short life are spent this hour
And no hand in the universe can turn
Thy hour glass, if these gummed leaves be burnt
Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps."
I heard, I look'd: two senses both at once,
So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny
Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed.
Prodigious seem'd the toil; the leaves were yet
Burning,—when suddenly a palsied chill
Struck from the paved level up my limbs,
And was ascending quick to put cold grasp
Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat:
I shriek'd, and the sharp anguish of my shriek
Stung my own ears—I strove hard to escape
The numbness; strove to gain the lowest step.
Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold
Grew stifling, suffocating, at the heart;
And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not.
One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd
The lowest stair; and as it touch'd, life seem'd
To pour in at the toes: I mounted up
As once fair angels on a ladder flew
From the green turf to heaven. "Holy Power,"

Cried I, approaching near the horned shrine,
 "What am I that should so be sav'd from death?
 What am I that another death come not
 To choke my utterance sacrilegious here?"
 Then said the veiled Shadow: "Thou hast felt
 What 'tis to die and live again before
 Thy fated hour; that thou hadst power to do so
 Is thy own safety; thou hast dated on
 Thy doom." "High Prophetess," said I, "purge off,
 Benign, if so it please thee, my mind's film."
 "None can usurp this height," returned that shade,
 "But those to whom the miseries of the world
 Are misery, and will not let them rest.
 All else who find a haven in the world,
 Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,
 If by a chance into this fane they come,
 Rot on the pavement where thou rotted'st half."
 "Are there not thousands in the world," said I,
 Encourag'd by the sooth voice of the shade,
 "Who love their fellows even to the death;
 Who feel the giant agony of the world;
 And more, like slaves to poor humanity,
 Labour for mortal good? I sure should see
 Other men here, but I am here alone."
 "Those whom thou spak'st of are no visionaries,"
 Rejoin'd that voice,—“they are no dreamers weak;
 They seek no wonder but the human face,
 No music but a happy-noted voice—
 They come not here, they have no thought to come—
 And thou art here, for thou art less than they.
 What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,
 To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing,
 A fever of thyself—think of the earth;
 What bliss even in hope is there for thee?
 What haven? every creature hath its home;

Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,
Whether his labours be sublime or low—
The pain alone; the joy alone; distinct:
Only the dreamer venoms all his days,
Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve.
Therefore, that happiness be somewhat shar'd,
Such things as thou art are admitted oft
Into like gardens thou didst pass erewhile,
And suffer'd in these Temples: for that cause
Thou standest safe beneath this statue's knees."
"That I am favored for unworthiness,
By such propitious parley medicin'd
In sickness not ignoble, I rejoice,
Aye, and could weep for love of such award."
So answer'd I, continuing, "If it please,
Majestic shadow, tell me where I am,
Whose altar this; for whom this incense curls:
What Image this whose face I cannot see
For the broad marble knees; and who thou art,
Of accent feminine, so courteous."
Then the tall shade, in drooping linen veil'd,
Spoke out, so much more earnest, that her breath
Stirr'd the thin folds of gauze that drooping hung
About a golden censer from her hand
Pendent; and by her voice I knew she shed
Long-treasured tears. "This temple, sad and lone,
Is all spared from the thunder of a war
Foughten long since by giant Hierarchy
Against rebellion: this old Image here,
Whose carved features wrinkled as he fell,
Is Saturn's; I, Moneta, left supreme
Sole priestess of his desolation."—
I had no words to answer; for my tongue
Useless, could find about its roofed home
No syllable of a fit majesty

To make rejoinder to Moneta's mourn.
There was a silence while the altar's blaze
Was fainting for sweet food: I look'd thereon,
And on the paved floor, where nigh were piled
Faggots of cinnamon, and many heaps
Of other crisped spicewood—then again
I look'd upon the altar, and its horns
Whiten'd with ashes, and its lang'rous flame,
And then upon the offerings again;
And so by turns till sad Moneta cried—
"The sacrifice is done, but not the less
Will I be kind to thee for thy good will.
My power, which to me is still a curse,
Shall be to thee a wonder; for the scenes
Still swooning vivid through my globed brain,
With an electal changing misery,
Thou shalt with these dull mortal eyes behold
Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not."
As near as an immortal's sphered words
Could to a mother's soften, were these last:
But yet I had a terror of her robes,
And chiefly of the veils, that from her brow
Hung pale, and curtain'd her in mysteries
That made my heart too small to hold its blood.
This saw that Goddess, and with sacred hand
Parted the veils. Then I saw a wan face,
Not pin'd by human sorrows, but bright blanch'd
By an immortal sickness which kills not;
It works a constant change, which happy death
Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
To no death was that visage; it had pass'd
The lily and the snow; and beyond these
I must not think now, though I saw that face—
But for her eyes I should have fled away.
They held me back with a benignant light,

Soft mitigated by divinest lids
Half closed, and visionless entire they seem'd
Of all external things—they saw me not,
But in blank splendour beam'd like the mild moon,
Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not
What eyes are upward cast. As I had found
A grain of gold upon a mountain side,
And twing'd with avarice strain'd out my eyes
To search its sullen entrails rich with ore,
So, at the view of sad Moneta's brow,
I ached to see what things the hollow brow
Behind enwombed: what high tragedy
In the dark secret Chambers of her skull
Was acting, that could give so dread a stress
To her cold lips, and fill with such a light
Her planetary eyes; and touch her voice
With such a sorrow—"Shade of Memory!"
Cried I, with act adorant at her feet,
"By all the gloom hung round thy fallen house,
By this last Temple, by the golden age,
By great Apollo, thy dear foster-child,
And by thyself, forlorn divinity,
The pale Omega of a wither'd race,
Let me behold, according as thou saidst,
What in thy brain so ferments to and fro."—
No sooner had this conjuration pass'd
My devout lips; than side by side we stood
(Like a stunt bramble by a solemn Pine)
Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon and Eve's one star.
Onward I look'd beneath the gloomy boughs,
And saw what first I thought an Image huge,
Like to the Image pedestal'd so high
In Saturn's Temple. Then Moneta's voice

Came brief upon mine ear,—“So Saturn sat
When he had lost his realms”—whereon there grew
A power within me of enormous ken,
To see as a God sees, and take the depth
Of things as nimbly as the outward eye
Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme
At those few words hung vast before my mind,
With half-unravel’d web. I set myself
Upon an Eagle’s watch, that I might see,
And seeing ne’er forget. No stir of life
Was in this shrouded vale, not so much air
As in the zoning of a summer’s day
Robs not one light seed from the feather’d grass,
But where the dead leaf fell there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deaden’d more
By reason of the fallen Divinity
Spreading more shade: the Naiad ’mid her reeds
Press’d her cold finger closer to her lips.
Along the margin sand large footmarks went
No farther than to where old Saturn’s feet
Had rested, and there slept, how long a sleep!
Degraded, cold, upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were clos’d;
While his bow’d head seem’d listening to the Earth,
His antient mother, for some comfort yet.
It seem’d no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one who, with a kindred hand,
Touch’d his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
Then came the griev’d voice of Mnemosyne,
And griev’d I hearken’d. “That divinity
Whom thou saw’st step from yon forlornest wood,
And with slow pace approach our fallen King,
Is Thea, softest-natur’d of our Brood.”

I mark'd the goddess, in fair statuary
Surpassing wan Moneta by the head,
And in her sorrow nearer woman's tears.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun;
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart; as if just there
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his hollow ear
Leaning, with parted lips, some words she spoke
In solemn tenor and deep organ tone;
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in this-like accenting; how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!
"Saturn, look up—and for what, poor lost king?
I have no comfort for thee; no—not one;
I cannot cry, *Wherefore thus sleepest thou?*
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
Knows thee not, so afflicted, for a God.
The Ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air
Is emptied of thy hoary Majesty.
Thy thunder, captious at the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
And thy sharp lightning in unpracticed hands
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
With such remorseless speed still come new woes
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on: me thoughtless, why should I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn, sleep on, while at thy feet I weep."—

As when upon a tranced summer-night
Forests, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night, without a noise,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Swelling upon the silence; dying off;
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words, and went; the while in tears
She press'd her fair large forehead to the earth,
Just where her fallen hair might spread in curls,
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
Long, long, those two were postured motionless,
Like sculpture builded up upon the grave
Of their own power. A long awful time
I look'd upon them; still they were the same;
The frozen God still bending to the Earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet.
Moneta silent. Without stay or prop
But my own weak mortality, I bore
The load of this eternal quietude,
The unchanging gloom and the three fixed shapes
Ponderous upon my senses a whole moon;
For by my burning brain I measured sure
Her silver seasons shedded on the night,
And every day by day methought I grew
More gaunt and ghostly—Oftentimes I pray'd
Intense, that Death would take me from the vale
And all its burthens—Gasping with despair
Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself,
Until old Saturn rais'd his faded eyes,
And look'd around and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess at his feet.
As the moist scent of flowers, and grass, and leaves,
Fills forest dells with a pervading air,
Known to the woodland nostril, so the words
Of Saturn fill'd the mossy glooms around,

Even to the hollows of time-eaten oaks,
And to the windings in the foxes' holes,
With sad low tones, while thus he spake, and sent
Strange musings to the solitary Pan.
"Moan, brethren, moan; for we are swallow'd up
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
And peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in. Moan and wail.
Moan, brethren, moan; for lo! the rebel spheres
Spin round, the stars their antient courses keep,
Clouds still with shadowy moisture haunt the earth,
Still suck their fill of light from sun and moon,
Still buds the tree, and still the sea-shores murmur.
There is no death in all the universe,
No smell of Death—there shall be death—moan, moan,
Moan, Cybele, moan, for thy pernicious babes
Have chang'd a God into a shaking Palsy.
Moan, brethren, moan; for I have no strength left;
Weak as the reed—weak—feeble as my voice—
O, O, the pain, the pain of feebleness.
Moan, moan; for still I thaw—or give me help:
Throw down those Imps, and give me victory.
Let me hear other groans; and trumpets blown
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival,
From the gold peaks of heaven's high piled clouds;
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells; and let there be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children"—So he feebly ceas'd,
With such a poor and sickly-sounding pause,
Methought I heard some old man of the earth
Bewailing earthly loss; nor could my eyes
And ears act with that [pleasant] unison of sense

Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form,
And dolourous accent from a tragic harp
With large-limb'd visions. More I scrutinised.
Still fix'd he sat beneath the sable trees,
Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms,
With leaves all hush'd: his awful presence there
(Now all was silent) gave a deadly lie
To what I erewhile heard: only his lips
Trembled amid the white curls of his beard.
They told the truth, though, round, the snowy locks
Hung nobly, as upon the face of heaven
A midday fleece of clouds. Thea arose,
And stretch'd her white arm through the hollow dark,
Pointing some whither: whereat he too rose
Like a vast giant seen by men at sea
To grow pale from the waves at dull midnight.
They melted from my sight into the woods:
Ere I could turn, Moneta cried, "These twain
Are speeding to the families of grief,
Where, roof'd in by black rocks, they waste in pain
And darkness for no hope."—And she spake on,
As ye may read who can unwearied pass
Onward from the Antechamber of this dream,
Where even at the open doors awhile
I must delay, and glean my memory
Of her high phrase:—perhaps no further dare.

CANTO II

"MORTAL, that thou mayst understand aright,
 I humanize my sayings to thine ear,
 Making comparisons of earthly things;
 Or thou might'st better listen to the wind,
 Whose language is to thee a barren noise,
 Though it blows legend-laden thro' the trees—
 In melancholy realms big tears are shed,
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
 Too huge for mortal tongue, or pen of scribe.
 The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
 Groan for the old allegiance once more,
 Listening in their doom for Saturn's voice.
 But one of our whole eagle-brood still keeps
 His sov'reignty, and Rule, and majesty;
 Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
 Still sits, still snuffs the incense teeming up
 From man to the sun's God: yet unsecure,
 For as upon the Earth dire prodigies
 Fright and perplex, so also shudders he;
 Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's Even screech,
 Or the familiar visitings of one
 Upon the first toll of his passing bell:
 But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
 Make great Hyperion ache. His palace bright,
 Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
 And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
 Glares a blood red through all the thousand Courts,
 Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
 And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
 Flush angerly; when he would taste the wreaths
 Of incense breath'd aloft from sacred hills
 Instead of sweets, his ample palate takes
 Savour of poisonous brass and metals sick.

Wherefore when harbour'd in the sleepy West,
 After the full completion of fair day,
 For rest divine upon exalted couch
 And slumber in the arms of melody,
 He paces through the pleasant hours of ease,
 With strides colossal, on from Hall to Hall,
 While, far within each aisle and deep recess,
 His winged minions in close clusters stand
 Amaz'd, and full of fear; like anxious men
 Who on a wide plain gather in sad troops,
 When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
 Even now while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
 Goes step for step with Thea from yon woods,
 Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
 Is sloping to the threshold of the West.—
 Thither we tend." Now in clear light I stood,
 Relieved from the dusk vale. Mnemosyne
 Was sitting on a square edged polish'd stone,
 That in its lucid depth reflected pure
 Her priestess-garments. My quick eyes ran on
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
 Thro' bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
 And diamond paved lustrous long arcades.
 Anon rush'd by the bright Hyperion;
 His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
 And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
 That scar'd away the meek ethereal hours,
 And made their dove-wings tremble: on he flared.

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(AUGUST—SEPTEMBER, 1819)

A Party of Lovers

PENSIVE they sit, and roll their languid eyes,
Nibble their toast and cool their tea with sighs;
Or else forget the purpose of the night,
Forget their tea, forget their appetite.
See, with cross'd arms they sit—Ah! happy crew,
The fire is going out and no one rings
For coals, and therefore no coals Betty brings.
A fly is in the milk-pot. Must he die
Circled by a humane society?
No, no; there, Mr. Werter takes his spoon,
Inserts it, dips the handle, and lo! soon
The little straggler, sav'd from perils dark,
Across the teaboard draws a long wet mark.

Romeo! Arise, take snuffers by the handle,
There's a large cauliflower in each candle.
A winding sheet—ah, me! I must away
To No. 7, just beyond the circus gay.
Alas, my friend, your coat sits very well;
Where may your Tailor live? I may not tell.
O pardon me. I'm absent now and then.
Where *might* my Tailor live? I say again
I cannot tell, let me no more be teased;
He lives in Wapping, might live where he pleased.

(SEPTEMBER 17, 1819)

To Autumn

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day;
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river salallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

(SEPTEMBER 19, 1819)

The Day is gone

THE day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!

Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast
Warm breath, tranced whisper, tender semi-tone,

Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous waist!
Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,

When the dusk holiday—or holinight
Of fragrant-curtain'd love begins to weave

The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight;
Faded the flower and all its budded charms,

Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,
Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,

Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—
But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,
He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

(OCTOBER, 1819)

Lines to Fanny

WHAT can I do to drive away
Remembrance from my eyes? for they have seen,
Aye, an hour ago, my brilliant Queen!
Touch has a memory. O say, love, say,
What can I do to kill it and be free
In my old liberty?
When every fair one that I saw was fair
Enough to catch me in but half a snare,
Not keep me there:
When, howe'er poor or particolour'd things,
My muse had wings,
And ever ready was to take her course
Whither I bent her force,
Unintellectual, yet divine to me;—
Divine, I say!—What sea-bird o'er the sea
Is a philosopher the while he goes
Winging along where the great water throes?

How shall I do
To get anew
Those moulted feathers, and so mount once more
Above, above
The reach of fluttering Love,
And make him cower lowly while I soar?
Shall I gulp wine? No, that is vulgarism,
A heresy and schism,
Foisted into the canon-law of love;—
No,—wine is only sweet to happy men;
More dismal cares
Seize on me unawares,—
Where shall I learn to get my peace again?
To banish thoughts of that most hateful land,
Dungeon of my friends, that wicked strand

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Where they were wreck'd and live a wrecked life;
That monstrous region, whose dull rivers pour,
Ever from their sordid urns unto the shore,
Unown'd of any weedy-haired gods;
Whose winds, all zephyrless, hold scourging rods,
Iced in the great lakes, to afflict mankind;
Whose rank-grown forests, frosted, black, and blind,
Would fright a Dryad; whose harsh herbag'd meads
Make lean and lank the starv'd ox while he feeds;
There bad flowers have no scent, birds no sweet song,
And great unerring Nature once seems wrong.

O, for some sunny spell
To dissipate the shadows of this hell!
Say they are gone,—with the new dawning light
Steps forth my lady bright!
O, let me once more rest
My soul upon that dazzling breast!
Let once again these aching arms be placed,
The tender gaolers of thy waist!
And let me feel that warm breath here and there
To spread a rapture in my very hair,—
O, the sweetness of the pain!
Give me those lips again!
Enough! Enough! it is enough for me
To dream of thee!

(OCTOBER, 1819)

Ode to Fanny

PHYSICIAN Nature! let my spirit blood!
O ease my heart of verse and let me rest;
Throw me upon thy Tripod, till the flood
Of stifling numbers ebbs from my full breast.
A theme! a theme! great nature! give a theme;
Let me begin my dream.

I come—I see thee, as thou standest there,
Beckon me not into the wintry air.

Ah! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,
And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries,—
To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty wears
A smile of such delight,
As brilliant and as bright,
As when with ravish'd, aching, vassal eyes,
Lost in soft amaze,
I gaze, I gaze!

Who now, with greedy looks, eats up my feast?
What stare outfaces now my silver moon?
Ah! keep that hand unravish'd at the least;
Let, let, the amorous burn—
But, pr'ythee, do not turn
The current of your heart from me so soon.
O! save, in charity,
The quickest pulse for me.

Save it for me, sweet love! though music breathe
Voluptuous visions into the warm air,
Though swimming through the dance's dangerous wreath:
Be like an April day,
Smiling and cold and gay,

A temperate lilly, temperate as fair;
Then, Heaven! there will be
A warmer June for me.

Why, this—you'll say, my Fanny! is not true:
Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,
Where the heart beats: confess—'tis nothing new—
Must not a woman be
A feather on the sea,
Sway'd to and fro by every wind and tide?
Of as uncertain speed
As blow-ball from the mead?

I know it—and to know it is despair
To one who loves you as I love, sweet Fanny!
Whose heart goes fluttering for you everywhere,
Nor, when away you roam,
Dare keep its wretched home.
Love, love alone, has pains severe and many:
When loneliest keep me free,
From torturing jealousy.

Ah! if you prize my subdued soul above
The poor, the fading, brief pride of an hour;
Let none profane my Holy See of love,
Or with a rude hand break
The sacramental cake:
Let none else touch the just new-budded flower.
If not—may my eyes close,
Love! on their last repose.

(WINTER, 1819)

To Fanny

I CRY your mercy—pity—love!—aye, love!
Merciful love that tantalizes not,
One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,
Unmask'd, and being seen—without a blot!
O! let me have thee whole,—all—all—be mine!
That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest
Of love, your kiss,—those hands, those eyes divine,
That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured breast,—
Yourself—your soul—in pity give me all,
Withhold no atom's atom or I die,
Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,
Forget, in the mist of idle misery,
Life's purposes,—the palate of my mind
Losing its gust, and my ambition blind!

(WINTER, 1819)

A Dramatic Fragment

SCENE I.—*Field of Battle.*

STEPHEN. If shame can on a soldier's vein-swoll'n front
Spread deeper crimson than the battle's toil,
Blush in your casing helmets! for see, see!
Yonder my chivalry, my pride of war,
Wrench'd with an iron hand from firm array,
Are routed loose about the plashy meads,
Of honour forfeit. O that my known voice
Could reach your dastard ears, and fright you more!
Fly, cowards, fly! Gloucester is at your backs!
Throw your slack bridles o'er the flurried manes,
Ply well the rowel with faint trembling heels,
Scampering to death at last!

2ND KNIGHT. Sure of a bloody prey, seeing the fens
Will swamp them girth-deep.

Enter Earl BALDWIN and soldiers, as defeated.

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BALDWIN. No scarecrow, but the fortunate star
Of boisterous Chester, whose fell truncheon now
Points level to the goal of victory.
This way he comes, and if you would maintain
Your person unaffronted by vile odds,
Take horse, my Lord.

STEPHEN. And which way spur for life?
Now I thank heaven I am in the toils,
That soldiers may bear witness how my arm
Can burst the meshes. Not the eagle more
Loves to beat up against a tyrannous blast,
Than I to meet the torrent of my foes.
This is a brag—be't so,—but if I fall,
Carve it upon my 'scutcheon'd sepulchre.
On, fellow soldiers! Earl of Redvers, back!
Not twenty Earls of Chester shall brow-beat
The diadem. [Exeunt. Alarum.]

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Field.*

*Trumpets sounding a Victory. Enter GLOCESTER, Knights,
and Forces.*

GLOCESTER. Now may we lift our bruised visors up
And take the flattering freshness of the air,
While the wide din of battle dies away
Into times past, yet to be echoed sure
In the silent pages of our chroniclers.

1ST KNIGHT. Will Stephen's death be mark'd there, my
good Lord,
Or that we give him lodging in yon towers?

GLOCESTER. Fain would I know the great usurper's fate.

Enter two Captains severally.

1ST CAPTAIN. My Lord!

2ND CAPTAIN. Most noble Earl!

1ST CAPTAIN. The King——

2ND CAPTAIN.

The Empress greets——

GLOCESTER. What of the King?

1ST CAPTAIN.

He sole and lone maintains

A hopeless bustle 'mid our swarming arms,
And with a nimble savageness attacks,
Escapes, makes fiercer onset, then anew
Eludes death, giving death to most that dare
Trespass within the circuit of his sword!
He must by this have fallen. Baldwin is taken;
And for the Duke of Bretagne, like a stag
He flies, for the Welsh beagles to hunt down.
God save the Empress!

GLOCESTER.

Now our dreaded Queen:

What message from her Highness?

2ND CAPTAIN

Royal Maud

From the throng'd towers of Lincoln hath looked down,
Like Pallas from the walls of Ilium,
And seen her enemies havock'd at her feet.
She greets most noble Gloucester from her heart,
Intreating him, his captains, and brave knights,
To grace a banquet. The high city gates
Are envious which shall see your triumph pass;
The streets are full of music.

Enter 2ND KNIGHT.

GLOCESTER.

Whence come you?

2ND KNIGHT. From Stephen, my good Prince—Stephen!
Stephen!

GLOCESTER. Why do you make such echoing of his name?

2ND KNIGHT. Because I think, my Lord, he is no man,
But a fierce demon, 'nointed safe from wounds,
And misbaptized with a Christian name.

GLOCESTER. A mighty soldier!—Does he still hold out?

2ND KNIGHT. He shames our victory. His valour still
Keeps elbow-room amid our eager swords,
And holds our bladed falchions all aloof
His gleaming battle-axe, being slaughter-sick,
Smote on the morion of a Flemish knight,
Broke short in his hand; upon the which he flung
The heft away with such a vengeful force
It paunch'd the Earl of Chester's horse, who then
Spleen-hearted came in full career at him.

GLOCESTER. Did no one take him at a vantage then?

2ND KNIGHT. Three then with tiger leap upon him flew,
Whom with his sword swift drawn and nimbly held,
He stung away again, and stood to breathe,
Smiling. Anon upon him rush'd once more
A throng of foes, and in this renew'd strife,
My sword met his and snapp'd off at the hilt.

GLOCESTER. Come, lead me to this Mars and let us move
In silence, not insulting his sad doom
With clamorous trumpets. To the Empress bear
My salutation as befits the time.

[*Exeunt GLOCESTER and Forces.*]

SCENE III.—*The Field of Battle. Enter STEPHEN
unarmed.*

STEPHEN. Another sword! And what if I could seize
One from Bellona's gleaming armoury,
Or choose the fairest of her sheaved spears!
Where are my enemies? Here, close at hand,
Here come the testy brood. O, for a sword!
I'm faint—a biting sword! A noble sword!
A hedge-stake—or a ponderous stone to hurl
With brawny vengeance, like the labourer Cain.
Come on! Farewell my kingdom, and all hail

Thou superb, plumed, and helmeted renown!
All hail! I would not truck this brilliant day
To rule in Pylos with a Nestor's beard—
Come on!

Enter DE KAIMS and Knights, &c.

DE KAIMS. Is't madness, or a hunger after death,
That makes thee thus unarm'd throw taunts at us?
Yield, Stephen, or my sword's point dips in
The gloomy current of a traitor's heart.

STEPHEN. Do it, De Kaims, I will not budge an inch.

DE KAIMS. Yes, of thy madness thou shalt take the meed

STEPHEN. Darest thou?

DE KAIMS. How, dare, against a man disarm'd?

STEPHEN. What weapons has the lion but himself?
Come not near me, De Kaims, for by the price
Of all the glory I have won this day,
Being a king, I will not yield alive
To any but the second man of the realm,
Robert of Gloucester.

DE KAIMS. Thou shalt vail to me.

STEPHEN. Shall I, when I have sworn against it, sir?
Thou think'st it brave to take a breathing king,
That, on a court-day bow'd to haughty Maud,
The awed presence-chamber may be bold
To whisper, There's the man who took alive
Stephen—me—prisoner. Certes, De Kaims,
The ambition is a noble one.

DE KAIMS. 'Tis true.

And, Stephen, I must compass it.

STEPHEN. No, no,

Do not tempt me to throttle you on the gorge,
Or with my gauntlet crush your hollow breast,
Just when your knighthood is grown ripe and full
For lordship.

A SOLDIER. Is an honest yeoman's spear
Of no use at a need? Take that.

STEPHEN. Ah, dastard!

DE KAIMS. What, you are vulnerable! my prisoner.

STEPHEN. No, not yet. I disclaim it, and demand
Death as a sovereign right unto a king
Who 'sdains to yield to any but his peer,
If not in title, yet in noble deeds,
The Earl of Gloucester. Stab to the hilt, De Kaims,
For I will never by mean hands be led
From this so famous field. Do you hear! Be quick!

[*Trumpets. Enter the Earl of CHESTER and
Knights.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Presence Chamber. Queen MAUD in a Chair
of State, the Earls of GLOUCESTER and CHESTER, Lords,
Attendants.*

MAUD. Gloucester, no more. I will behold that Boulogne;
Set him before me. Not for the poor sake
Of regal pomp and a vain-glorious hour,
As thou with wary speech, yet near enough,
Hast hinted.

GLOUCESTER. Faithful counsel have I given;
If wary, for your Highness' benefit.

MAUD. The Heavens forbid that I should not think so,
For by thy valour have I won this realm,
Which by thy wisdom I will ever keep.
To sage advisers let me ever bend
A meek attentive ear, so that they treat
Of the wide kingdom's rule and government,
Not trenching on our actions personal.
Advised, not school'd, I would be; and henceforth
Spoken to in clear, plain, and open terms,
Not side-ways sermon'd at.

GLOCESTER. Then, in plain terms,
Once more for the fallen king—

MAUD. Your pardon, brother,
I would no more of that; for, as I said,
'Tis not for worldly pomp I wish to see
The rebel, but as dooming judge to give
A sentence something worthy of his guilt.

GLOCESTER. If 't must be so, I'll bring him to your
presence. (Exit GLOCESTER.)

MAUD. A meaner summoner might do as well.
My Lord of Chester, is 't true what I hear
Of Stephen of Boulogne, our prisoner,
That he, as a fit penance for his crimes,
Eats wholesome, sweet, and palatable food
Off Gloucester's golden dishes—drinks pure wine,
Lodges soft?

CHESTER. More than that, my gracious Queen,
Has anger'd me. The noble Earl, methinks,
Full soldier as he is, and without peer
In counsel, dreams too much among his books.
It may read well, but sure 'tis out of date
To play the Alexander with Darius.

MAUD. Truth! I think so. By Heavens, it shall not last!

CHESTER. It would amaze your Highness now to mark
How Gloucester overstrains his courtesy
To that crime-loving rebel, that Boulogne——

MAUD. That ingrate!

CHESTER. For whose vast ingratitude
To our late sovereign lord, your noble sire,
The generous Earl condoles in his mishaps,
And with a sort of lackeying friendliness
Talks off the mighty frowning from his brow,
Woos him to hold a duet in a smile,
Or, if it please him, play an hour at chess——

MAUD. A perjured slave!

The Cap and Bells

or, The Jealousies

A Faery Tale

IN midmost Ind, beside Hydaspes cool,
 There stood, or hover'd, tremulous in the air,
 A faery city, 'neath the potent rule
 Of Emperor Elfinan; famed ev'rywhere
 For love of mortal women, maidens fair,
 Whose lips were solid, whose soft hands were made
 Of a fit mould and beauty, ripe and rare,
 To pamper his slight wooing, warm yet staid:
 He lov'd girls smooth as shades, but hated a mere shade.

This was a crime forbidden by the law;
 And all the priesthood of his city wept,
 For ruin and dismay they well foresaw
 If impious prince no bound or limit kept,
 And faery Zendervester overstept;
 They wept, he sinn'd, and still he would sin on,
 They dreamt of sin, and he sinn'd while they slept;
 In vain the pulpit thunder'd at the throne,
 Caricature was vain, and vain the tart lampoon.

Which seeing, his high court of parliament
 Laid a remonstrance at his Highness' feet,
 Praying his royal senses to content
 Themselves with what in faery land was sweet
 Befitting best that shade with shade should meet:
 Whereat, to calm their fears, he promised soon

From mortal tempters all to make retreat,
Aye, even on the first of the new moon
An immaterial wife to espouse as heaven's boon.

Meantime he sent a fluttering embassy
To Pigmio, of Imaus sovereign,
To half beg, and half demand, respectfully,
The hand of his fair daughter Bellanaine;
An audience had, and speeching done, they gain
Their point, and bring the weeping bride away;
Whom, with but one attendant, safely lain
Upon their wings, they bore in bright array,
While little harps were touch'd by many a lyric fay.

As in old pictures tender cherubim
A child's soul thro' the sapphired canvas bear,
So thro' a real heaven, on they swim
With the sweet princess on her plumaged lair,
Speed giving to the winds her lustrous hair;
And so she journey'd, sleeping or awake,
Save when, for healthful exercise and air,
She chose to *promener à l'aile*, or take
A pigeon's somerset, for sport or change's sake.

"Dear Princess, do not whisper me so loud,"
Quoth Corallina, nurse and confidant,
"Do not you see there, lurking in a cloud,
Close at your back, that sly old Crafticant?
He hears a whisper plainer than a rant:
Dry up your tears, and do not look so blue;
He's Elfinan's great state-spy militant,
His running, lying, flying footman too,—
Dear mistress, let him have no handle against you!

“Show him a mouse’s tail, and he will guess,
With metaphysic swiftness, at the mouse;
Show him a garden, and with speed no less
He’ll surmise sagely of a dwelling-house,
And plot, in the same minute, how to chouse
The owner out of it; show him a”——“Peace!
Peace! nor contrive thy mistress’ ire to rouse!”
Return’d the Princess, “my tongue shall not cease
Till from this hated match I get a free release.

“Ah, beauteous mortal!” “Hush!” quoth Coralline,
“Really you must not talk of him, indeed.”
“You hush!” replied the mistress, with a shine
Of anger in her eyes, enough to breed
In stouter hearts than nurse’s fear and dread:
’Twas not the glance itself made Nursey flinch,
But of its threat she took the utmost heed;
Not liking in her heart an hour-long pinch,
Or a sharp needle run into her back an inch.

So she was silenced, and fair Bellanaine,
Writhing her little body with ennui,
Continued to lament and to complain,
That Fate, cross-purposing, should let her be
Ravish’d away far from her dear countree;
That all her feelings should be set at nought,
In trumping up this match so hastily,
With lowland blood; and lowland blood she thought
Poison, as every stanch true-born Imaian ought.

Sorely she grieved, and wetted three or four
White Provence rose-leaves with her faery tears,
But not for this cause;—alas! she had more
Bad reasons for her sorrow, as appears
In the famed memoirs of a thousand years,
Written by Crafticant, and published
By Parpaglion and Co. (those sly compeers
Who raked up ev'ry fact against the dead,)
In Scarab Street, Panthea, at the Jubal's Head.

Where, after a long hypercritic howl
Against the vicious manners of the age,
He goes on to expose, with heart and soul,
What vice in this or that year was the rage,
Backbiting all the world in ev'ry page;
With special structures on the horrid crime,
(Section'd and subsection'd with learning sage,)
Of faeries stooping on their wings sublime
To kiss a mortal's lips, when such were in their prime.

Turn to the copious index, you will find
Somewhere in the column, headed letter B,
The name of Bellanaine, if you're not blind;
Then pray refer to the text, and you will see
An article made up of calumny
Against this highland princess, rating her
For giving way, so over fashionably,
To this new-fangled vice, which seems a burr
Stuck in his moral throat no coughing e'er could stir.
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There he says plainly that she loved a man!
That she around him flutter'd, flirted, toy'd,
Before her marriage with great Elfinan;
That after marriage, too, she never joy'd
In husband's company, but still employ'd
Her wits to 'scape away to Angle-land;
Where liv'd the youth, who worried and annoy'd
Her tender heart, and its warm ardours fann'd
To such a dreadful blaze her side would scorch her hand.

But let us leave this idle tittle-tattle
To waiting-maids and bedroom coteries,
Nor till fit time against her fame wage battle.
Poor Elfinan is very ill at ease;
Let us resume his subject if you please:
For it may comfort and console him much
To rhyme and syllable his miseries;
Poor Elfinan! whose cruel fate was such,
He sat and cursed a bride he knew he could not touch.

Soon as (according to his promises)
The bridal embassy had taken wing,
And vanish'd, bird-like, o'er the suburb trees,
The Emperor, empierced with the sharp sting
Of love, retired, vex'd and murmuring
Like any drone shut from the fair bee-queen,
Into his cabinet, and there did fling
His limbs upon a sofa, full of spleen,
And damn'd his House of Commons, in complete chagrin.

“I’ll trounce some of the members,” cried the Prince,
“I’ll put a mark against some rebel names,
I’ll make the Opposition-benches wince,
I’ll show them very soon, to all their shames,
What ’tis to smother up a Prince’s flames.
That ministers should join in it, I own,
Surprises me!—they too at these high games!
Am I an Emperor? Do I wear a crown?
Imperial Elfinan, go hang thyself or drown!

“I’ll trounce ’em!—there’s the square-cut chancellor,
His son shall never touch that bishopric;
And for the nephew of old Palfior,
I’ll show him that his speeches made me sick,
And give the colonelcy to Phalaric;
The tiptoe marquis, moral and gallant,
Shall lodge in shabby taverns upon tick;
And for the Speaker’s second cousin’s aunt,
She sha’n’t be maid of honour,—by heaven that she shan’t!

“I’ll shirk the Duke of A.; I’ll cut his brother;
I’ll give no garter to his eldest son;
I won’t speak to his sister or his mother.
The Viscount B. shall live at cut-and-run;
But how in the world can I contrive to stun
That fellow’s voice, which plagues me worse than any,
That stubborn fool, that impudent state-dun,
Who sets down ev’ry sovereign as a zany,—
That vulgar commoner, Esquire Biancopany?

“Monstrous affair! Pshaw! pah! what ugly minx
Will they fetch from Imaus for my bride?
Alas! my wearied heart within me sinks,
To think that I must be so near allied
To a cold dullard fay,—ah, woe betide!
Ah, fairest of all human loveliness!
Sweet Bertha! what crime can it be to glide
About the fragrant pleatings of thy dress,
Or kiss thine eyes, or count thy locks, tress after tress?”

So said, one minute’s while his eyes remain’d
Half lidded, piteous, languid, innocent;
But, in a wink, their splendour they regain’d,
Sparkling revenge with amorous fury blent.
Love thwarted in bad temper oft has vent:
He rose, he stamp’d his foot, he rang the bell,
And order’d some death-warrants to be sent
For signature:—somewhere the tempest fell,
As many a poor felon does not live to tell.

“At the same time, Eban,”—(this was his page,
A fay of colour, slave from top to toe,
Sent as a present, while yet under age,
From the Viceroy of Zanguebar,—wise, slow
His speech, his only words were “yes,” and “no,”
But swift of look, and foot, and wing was he,)—
“At the same time, Eban, this instant go
To Hum the soothsayer, whose name I see
Among the fresh arrivals in our empery.

“Bring Hum to me. But stay—here, take my ring,
The pledge of favour, that he not suspect
Any foul play, or awkward murdering,
Tho’ I have bowstrung many of his sect;
Throw in a hint, that if he should neglect
One hour the next shall see him in my grasp,
And the next after that shall see him neck’d
Or swallow’d by my hunger-starved asp,—
And mention (’tis as well) the torture of the wasp.”

These orders given, the Prince, in half a pet,
Let o’er the silk his propping elbow slide,
Caught up his little legs, and, in a fret,
Fell on the sofa on his royal side.
The slave retreated backwards, humble-eyed,
And with a slave-like silence closed the door,
And to old Hum thro’ street and alley hied;
He “knew the city,” as we say, of yore,
And for short cuts and turns, was nobody knew more.

It was the time when wholesale houses close
Their shutters with a moody sense of wealth,
But retail dealers, diligent, let loose
The gas (objected to on score of health),
Conveyed in little soldered pipes by stealth,
And make it flare in many a brilliant form,
That all the powers of darkness it repell’th,
Which to the oil-trade doth great scaith and harm,
And supersedeth quite the use of the glow-worm.

Eban, untempted by the pastrycooks,
(Of pastry he got store within the palace,)
With hasty steps, wrapp'd cloak, and solemn looks,
Incognito upon his errand sallies,
His smelling-bottle ready for the allies;
He passed the Hurdy-gurdies with disdain,
Vowing he'd have them sent on board the galleys;
Just as he made his vow it 'gan to rain,
Therefore he called a coach, and bade it drive amain.

"I'll pull the string," said he, and further said,
"Polluted jarvey! Ah, thou filthy hack!
Whose springs of life are all dried up and dead,
Whose linsey-woolsey lining hangs all slack,
Whose rug is straw, whose wholeness is a crack;
And evermore thy steps go clatter-clitter;
Whose glass once up can never be got back,
Who prov'st, with jolting arguments and bitter,
That 'tis of modern use to travel in a litter.

"Thou inconvenience! thou hungry crop
For all corn! thou snail-creeper to and fro,
Who while thou goest ever seem'st to stop,
And fiddle-faddle standest while you go;
I' the morning, freighted with a weight of woe,
Unto some lazar-house thou journeyest,
And in the evening tak'st a double row
Of dowdies, for some dance or party drest,
Besides the goods meanwhile thou movest east and west.

“By thy ungallant bearing and sad mien,
An inch appears the utmost thou couldst budge;
Yet at the slightest nod, or hint, or sign,
Round to the curb-stone patient dost thou trudge,
School’d in a beckon, learned in a nudge,
A dull-eyed Argus watching for a fare;
Quiet and plodding, thou dost bear no grudge
To whisking Tilburies or Phætons rare,
Curricles, or Mail-coaches, swift beyond compare.”

Philosophizing thus, he pull’d the check,
And bade the Coachman wheel to such a street,
Who, turning much his body, more his neck,
Louted full low, and hoarsely did him greet:
“Certes, monsieur were best take to his feet,
Seeing his servant can no further drive
For press of coaches, that to-night here meet,
Many as bees about a straw-capp’d hive,
When first for April honey into faint flowers they dive.”

Eban then paid his fare, and tiptoe went
To Hum’s hotel; and, as he on did pass
With head inclined, each dusky lineament
Show’d in the pearl-paved street, as in a glass,
His purple vest, that ever peeping was
Rich from the fluttering crimson of his cloak,
His silvery trowsers, and his silken sash,
Tied in a burnish’d knot, their semblance took
Upon the mirror’d walls, wherever he might look.

He smiled at self, and, smiling, show'd his teeth,
And seeing his white teeth, he smiled the more;
Lifted his eye-brows, spurned the path beneath,
Show'd teeth again, and smiled as heretofore,
Until he knock'd at the magician's door;
Where, till the porter answer'd, might be seen,
In the clear panel more he could adore,—
His turban wreath'd of gold, and white, and green,
Mustachios, ear-ring, nose-ring, and his sabre keen.

“Does not your master give a rout to-night?”
Quoth the dark page. “Oh, no!” return'd the Swiss,
“Next door but one to us, upon the right,
The *Magazin des Modes* now open is
Against the Emperor's wedding;—and, sir, this
My master finds a monstrous horrid bore;
As he retired, an hour ago I wis,
With his best beard and brimstone, to explore
And cast a quiet figure in his second floor.

“Gad! he's obliged to stick to business!
For chalk, I hear, stands at a pretty price;
And as for aqua vitæ—there's a mess!
The *dentes sapientiæ* of mice,
Our barber tells me too, are on the rise,—
Tinder's a lighter article,—nitre pure
Goes off like lightning,—grains of Paradise
At an enormous figure!—stars not sure!—
Zodiac will not move without a slight *douceur*!

“Venus won’t stir a peg without a fee,
And master is too partial, *entre nous*,
To——” “Hush—hush!” cried Eban, “sure that is he
Coming downstairs,—by St. Bartholomew!
As backwards as he can,—is ’t something new?
Or is ’t his custom, in the name of fun?”
“He always comes down backward, with one shoe”—
Return’d the porter—“off, and one shoe on,
Like, saving shoe for sock or stocking, my man John!”

It was indeed the great Magician,
Feeling, with careful toe, for every stair,
And retrograding careful as he can,
Backwards and downwards from his own two pair:
“Salpietrol!” exclaim’d Hum, “is the dog there?
He’s always in my way upon the mat!”
“He’s in the kitchen, or the Lord knows where,”—
Replied the Swiss,—“nasty, whelping brat!”
“Don’t beat him!” return’d Hum, and on the floor came pat.

Then facing right about, he saw the Page,
And said: “Don’t tell me what you want, Eban;
The Emperor is now in a huge rage,—
’Tis nine to one he’ll give you the rattan!
Let us away!” Away together ran
The plain-dressed sage and spangled blackamoor,
Nor rested till they stood to cool, and fan,
And breathe themselves at the Emperor’s chamber door,
When Eban thought he heard a soft imperial snore.

"I thought you guess'd, foretold, or prophesied,
That 's Majesty was in a raving fit?"
"He dreams," said Hum, "or I have ever lied,
That he is tearing you, sir, bit by bit."
"He's not asleep, and you have little wit,"
Replied the page; "that little buzzing noise,
Whate'er your palmistry may make it,
Comes from a play-thing of the Emperor's choice,
From a Man-Tiger-Organ, prettiest of his toys."

Eban then usher'd in the learned Seer:
Elfinan's back was turn'd, but, ne'ertheless,
Both, prostrate on the carpet, ear by ear,
Crept silently, and waited in distress,
Knowing the Emperor's moody bitterness;
Eban especially, who on the floor 'gan
Tremble and quake to death,—he feared less
A dose of senna-tea or nightmare Gorgon
Than the Emperor when he play'd on his Man-Tiger-Organ.

They kiss'd nine times the carpet's velvet face
Of glossy silk, soft, smooth, and meadow-green,
Where the close eye in deep rich fur might trace
A silver tissue, scantily to be seen,
As daisies lurk'd in June grass, buds in treen;
Sudden the music ceased, sudden the hand
Of majesty, by dint of passion keen,
Doubled into a common fist, went grand,
And knock'd down three cut glasses, and his best ink-stand.

Then turning round, he saw those trembling two:
"Eban," said he, "as slaves should taste the fruits
Of diligence, I shall remember you
To-morrow, or next day, as time suits,
In a finger conversation with my mutes,—
Begone!—for you, Chaldean! here remain;
Fear not, quake not, and as good wine recruits
A conjurer's spirits, what cup will you drain?
Sherry in silver, hock in gold, or glass'd champagne?"

"Commander of the Faithful!" answer'd Hum,
"In preference to these, I'll merely taste
A thimble-full of old Jamaica rum."
"A simple boon!" said Elfinan; "thou mayst
Have Nantz, with which my morning-coffee's laced."¹
"I'll have a glass of Nantz, then,"—said the seer,—
"Made racy—(sure my boldness is misplaced!)—
With the third part—(yet that is drinking dear!)—
Of the least drop of *crème de citron*, crystal clear."

"I pledge you, Hum! and pledge my dearest love,
My Bertha!" "Bertha! Bertha!" cried the sage,
"I know a many Berthas!" "Mine's above
All Berthas!" sighed the Emperor. "I engage,"
Said Hum, "in duty, and in vassalage,
To mention all the Berthas in the earth;—
There's Bertha Watson,—and Miss Bertha Page,—
This famed for languid eyes, and that for mirth,—
There's Bertha Blount of York,—and Bertha Knox of
Perth."

¹ "Mr. Nisby is of opinion that laced coffee is bad for the head."—*Spectator*.

"You seem to know"—"I do know," answer'd Hum,
"Your Majesty's in love with some fine girl
Named Bertha; but her surname will not come,
Without a little conjuring." "'Tis Pearl,
'Tis Bertha Pearl! What makes my brains so whirl?
And she is softer, fairer than her name!"
"Where does she live?" ask'd Hum. "Her fair locks curl
So brightly, they put all our fays to shame!—
Live?—O! at Canterbury, with her old granddame."

"Good! good!" cried Hum, "I've known her from a child!
She is a changeling of my management;
She was born at midnight in an Indian wild;
Her mother's screams with the striped tigers' blent,
While the torch-bearing slaves a halloo sent
Into the jungles; and her palanquin,
Rested amid the desert's dreariment,
Shook with her agony, till fair were seen
The little Bertha's eyes oped on the stars serene."

"I can't say," said the monarch; "that may be,
Just as it happen'd, true or else a bam!
Drink up your brandy, and sit down by me,
Feel, feel my pulse—how much in love I am!
And if your science is not all a sham
Tell me some means to get the lady here."
"Upon my honour!" said the son of Cham,¹
"She is my dainty changeling, near and dear,
Although her story sounds at first a little queer."

¹ Cham is said to have been the inventor of magic. Lucy learnt this from Bayle's Dictionary, and had copied a long Latin note from that work.

“Convey her to me, Hum, or by my crown,
My sceptre, and my cross-surmounted globe,
I’ll knock you”—“Does your majesty mean—*down?*
No, no, you never could my feelings probe
To such a depth!” The Emperor took his robe,
And wept upon its purple palatine,
While Hum continued, shamming half a sob,—
“In Canterbury doth your lady shine?
But let me cool your brandy with a little wine.”

Whereat a narrow Flemish glass he took,
That since belonged to Admiral De Witt,
Admired it with a connoisseuring look,
And with the ripest claret crowned it;
And, ere one lively bead could burst and flit,
He turned it quickly, nimbly upside down,
His mouth being held conveniently fit
To catch the treasure: “Best in all the town!”
He said, smack’d his moist lips, and gave a pleasant frown.

“Ah! good my Prince, weep not!” And then again
He fill’d a bumper. “Great Sire, do not weep!
Your pulse is shocking, but I’ll ease your pain.”
“Fetch me that ottoman, and prithee keep
Your voice low,” said the Emperor; “and steep
Some lady’s-fingers nice in Candy wine;
And prithee, Hum, behind the screen do peep
For the rose-water vase, magician mine!
And sponge my forehead,—so my love doth make me pine.

“Ah, cursed Bellanaine!” “Don’t think of her,”
Rejoin’d the Mago, “but on Bertha muse;
For, by my choicest best barometer,
You shall not throttled be in marriage noose;
I’ve said it, Sire; you only have to choose—
Bertha or Bellanaine.” So saying, he drew
From the left pocket of his threadbare hose
A sampler, hoarded slyly, good as new,
Holding it by his thumb and finger full in view.

“Sire, this is Bertha Pearl’s neat handy-work;
Her *name*, see here, *Midsummer, ninety-one.*”
Elfinan snatch’d it with a sudden jerk,
And wept as if he never would have done,
Honouring with royal tears the poor homespun;
Whereon were broider’d tigers with black eyes,
And long-tail’d pheasants, and a rising sun,
Plenty of posies, great stags, butterflies
Bigger than stags,—a moon,—with other mysteries.

The monarch handled o’er and o’er again
These day-school hieroglyphics with a sigh;
Somewhat in sadness, but pleas’d in the main
Till this oracular couplet met his eye
Astounded—*Cupid I, do thee defy!*
It was too much. He shrunk back in his chair,
Grew pale as death, and fainted—very nigh.
“Pho! nonsense!” exclaim’d Hum, “now don’t despair:
She does not mean it really. Cheer up, hearty—there!

“And listen to my words. You say you won’t,
On any terms, marry Miss Bellanaine;
It goes against your conscience—good! Well, don’t.
You say you love a mortal. I would fain
Persuade your honour’s highness to refrain
From peccadilloes. But, Sire, as I say,
What good would that do? And, to be more plain,
You would do me a mischief some odd day,
Cut off my ears and hands, or head, too, by my fay!

“Besides, manners forbid that I should pass any
Vile strictures on the conduct of a prince
Who should indulge his genius, if he has any,
Not, like a subject, foolish matters mince.
Now I think on ’t, perhaps I could convince
Your Majesty there is no crime at all
In loving pretty little Bertha, since
She’s very delicate,—not over tall,—
A fairy’s hand, and in the waist why—very small.”

“Ring the repeater, gentle Hum!” “ ’Tis five,”
Said gentle Hum; “the nights draw in apace;
The little birds, I hear, are all alive;
I see the dawning touch’d upon your face;
Shall I put out the candles, please your Grace?”
“Do put them out, and, without more ado,
Tell me how I may that sweet girl embrace,—
How you can bring her to me.” “That’s for you,
Great Emperor! to adventure, like a lover true.”

“I fetch her?”—“Yes, an’t like your Majesty;
And as she would be frighten’d wide awake
To travel such a distance through the sky,
Use of some soft manœuvre you must make,
For your convenience and her dear nerves’ sake;
Nice way would be to bring her in a swoon,
Anon, I’ll tell what course were best to take;
You must away this morning.” “Hum! so soon?”
“Sire, you must be in Kent by twelve o’clock at noon.”

At this great Cæsar started on his feet,
Lifted his wings, and stood attentive-wise.
“Those wings to Canterbury you must beat,
If you hold Bertha as a worthy prize.
Look in the Almanack—*Moore* never lies—
April the twenty-fourth,—this coming day,
Now breathing its new bloom upon the skies,
Will end in St. Mark’s Eve;—you must away,
For on that eve alone can you the maid convey.”

Then the magician solemnly ’gan frown,
So that his frost-white eyebrows, beetling low,
Shaded his deep green eyes and wrinkles brown
Plaited upon his furnace-scorched brow:
Forth from his hood that hung his neck below,
He lifted a bright casket of pure gold,
Touch’d a spring-lock, and there in wool, or snow
Charm’d into ever-freezing, lay an old
And legend-leaved book, mysterious to behold.

“Take this same book,—it will not bite you, Sire;
There, put it underneath your royal arm;
Though it’s a pretty weight it will not tire,
But rather on your journey keep you warm:
This is the magic, this the potent charm,
That shall drive Bertha to a fainting fit!
When the time comes don’t feel the least alarm,
But lift her from the ground, and swiftly flit
Back to your palace, where I wait for guerdon fit.”

“What shall I do with that same book?” “Why, merely
Lay it on Bertha’s table, close beside
Her work-box, and ’twill help your purpose dearly;
I say no more.” “Or good or ill betide,
Through the wide air to Kent this morn I glide!”
Exclaim’d the Emperor. “When I return,
Ask what you will,—I’ll give you my new bride!
And take some more wine, Hum;—O heaven! I burn
To be upon the wing! Now, now, that minx I spurn!”

“Leave her to me,” rejoin’d the magian:
“But how shall I account, illustrious fay!
For thine imperial absence? Pho! I can
Say you are very sick, and bar the way
To your so loving courtiers for one day;
If either of their two archbishops’ graces
Should talk of extreme unction, I shall say
You do not like cold pig with Latin phrases,
Which never should be used but in alarming cases.”

“Open the window, Hum! I’m ready now!”
“Zooks!” exclaim’d Hum, as up the sash he drew,
“Behold your Majesty, upon the brow
Of yonder hill, what crowds of people!” “Whew!
The monster’s always after something new,”
Return’d his Highness, “they are piping hot
To see my pigny Bellanaine. Hum! do
Tighten my belt a little,—so, so,—not
Too tight,—the book!—my wand!—so, nothing is forgot.”

“Wounds! how they shout!” said Hum, “and there,—
see, see!
The ambassadors returned from Pigmio!
The morning’s very fine,—uncommonly!
See, past the skirts of yon white cloud they go,
Tinging it with soft crimsons! Now below
Those sable-pointed heads of firs and pines
They dip, move on, and with them moves a glow
Along the forest side! Now amber lines
Reach the hill top, and now throughout the valley shines.”

“Why, Hum, you’re getting quite poetical!
Those *nows* you managed in a special style.”
“If ever you have leisure, Sire, you shall
See scraps of mine will make it worth your while,
Tit-bits for Phœbus!—yes, you well may smile.
Hark! hah! the bells!” “A little further yet,
Good Hum, and let me view this mighty coil.”
Then the great Emperor full graceful set
His elbow for a prop, and snuff’d his mignonnette.

The morn is full of holiday; loud bells
With rival clamours ring from every spire;
Cunningly-station'd music dies and swells
In echoing places; when the winds respire,
Light flags stream out like gauzy tongues of fire;
A metropolitan murmur, life-ful, warm,
Comes from the northern suburbs; rich attire
Freckles with red and gold the moving swarm;
While here and there clear trumpets blow a keen alarm.

And now the fairy escort was seen clear,
Like the old pageant of Aurora's train,
Above a pearl-built minster, hovering near;
First wily Crafticant, the chamberlain,
Balanced upon his grey-grown pinions twain,
His slender wand officially reveal'd;
Then black gnomes scattering sixpences like rain;
Then pages three and three; and next, slave-held,
The Imaian 'scutcheon bright,—one mouse in argent field.

Gentlemen pensioners next; and after them,
A troop of winged Janizaries flew;
Then Slaves, as presents bearing many a gem;
Then twelve physicians fluttering two and two;
And next a chaplain in a cassock new;
Then Lords in waiting; then (what head not reels
For pleasure?)—the fair Princess in full view,
Borne upon wings,—and very pleased she feels
To have such splendour dance attendance at her heels.

For there was more magnificence behind:
She waved her handkerchief. "Ah, very grand!"
Cried Elfinan, and closed the window-blind:
"And, Hum, we must not shilly-shally stand,—
Adieu! adieu! I'm off for Angle-land!
I say, old Hocus, have you such a thing
About you,—feel your pockets, I command,—
I want, this instant, an invisible ring,—
Thank you, old mummy!—now securely I take wing."

Then Elfinan swift vaulted from the floor,
And lighted graceful on the window-sill;
Under one arm the magic book he bore,
The other he could wave about at will;
Pale was his face, he still look'd very ill:
He bow'd at Bellanaine, and said—"Poor Bell!
Farewell! farewell! and if for ever! still
For ever fare thee well!"—and then he fell
A laughing!—snapp'd his fingers!—shame it is to tell!

"By'r Lady! he is gone!" cries Hum, "and I—
(I own it)—have made too free with his wine;
Old Crafticant will smoke me. By the bye!
This room is full of jewels as a mine.
Dear valuable creatures, how ye shine!
Sometime to-day I must contrive a minute,
If Mercury propitiously incline,
To examine his scrutoire, and see what's in it,
For of superfluous diamonds I as well may thin it.

“The Emperor’s horrid bad; yes, that’s my cue!”
Some histories say that this was Hum’s last speech;
That, being fuddled, he went reeling through
The corridor, and scarce upright could reach
The stair-head; that being glutted as a leech,
And used, as we ourselves have just now said,
To manage stairs reversely, like a peach
Too ripe, he fell, being puzzled in his head
With liquor and the staircase: verdict—*found stone dead.*

This as a falsehood Crafticanto treats;
And as his style is of strange elegance,
Gentle and tender, full of soft conceits,
(Much like our Boswell’s), we will take a glance
At his sweet prose, and, if we can, make dance
His woven periods into careless rhyme;
O, little faery Pegasus! rear—prance—
Trot round the quarto—ordinary time!
March, little Pegasus, with pawing hoof sublime!

Well, let us see,—*tenth book and chapter nine*,—
Thus Crafticant pursues his diary:—
“’Twas twelve o’clock at night, the weather fine,
Latitude thirty-six; our scouts descry
A flight of starlings making rapidly
Tow’rds Thibet. Mem.:—birds fly in the night;
From twelve to half-past—wings not fit to fly
For a thick fog—The Princess sulky quite;
Call’d for an extra shawl, and gave her nurse a bite.

“Five minutes before one—brought down a moth
With my new double-barrel—stewed the thighs
And made a very tolerable broth—
Princess turn’d dainty, to our great surprise,
Alter’d her mind, and thought it very nice:
Seeing her pleasant, tried her with a pun,
She frown’d; a monstrous owl across us flies
About this time,—a sad old figure of fun;
Bad omen—this new match can’t be a happy one.

“From two to half-past, dusky way we made,
Above the plains of Gobi,—desert, bleak;
Beheld afar off, in the hooded shade
Of darkness, a great mountain (strange to speak),
Spitting, from forth its sulphur-baken peak,
A fan-shaped burst of blood-red, arrowy fire,
Turban’d with smoke, which still away did reek,
Solid and black from that eternal pyre,
Upon the laden winds that scanty could respire.

“Just upon three o’clock a falling star
Created an alarm among our troop,
Kill’d a man-cook, a page, and broke a jar,
A tureen, and three dishes, at one swoop,
Then passing by the Princess, sing’d her hoop:
Could not conceive what Coralline was at,
She clapp’d her hands three times and cried out ‘Whoop!’
Some strange Imaian custom. A large bat
Came sudden ’fore my face, and brush’d against my hat.

“Five minutes thirteen seconds after three,
Far in the west a mighty fire broke out,
Conjectured, on the instant, it might be,
The city of Balk—’twas Balk beyond all doubt:
A Griffin, wheeling here and there about,
Kept reconnoitring us—doubled our guard—
Lighted our torches, and kept up a shout,
Till he sheer’d off—the Princess very scared—
And many on their marrow-bones for death prepared.

“At half-past three arose the cheerful moon—
Bivouack’d for four minutes on a cloud—
Where from the earth we heard a lively tune
Of tambourines and pipes, serene and loud,
While on a flowery lawn a brilliant crowd
Cinque-parted danced, some half asleep reposed
Beneath the green-fan’d cedars, some did shroud
In silken tents, and ’mid light fragrance dozed,
Or on the open turf their soothed eyelids closed.

“Dropp’d my gold watch, and kill’d a kettle-drum—
It went for apoplexy—foolish folks!—
Left it to pay the piper—a good sum—
(I’ve got a conscience, maugre people’s jokes;)
To scrape a little favour; ’gan to coax
Her Highness’ pug-dog—got a sharp rebuff—
She wish’d a game at whist—made three revokes—
Turn’d from myself, her partner, in a huff;
His Majesty will know her temper time enough.

“She cried for chess—I play’d a game with her—
Castled her King with such a vixen look,
It bodes ill to his Majesty—(refer
To the second chapter of my fortieth book,
And see what hoity-toity airs she took).
At half-past four the morn essay’d to beam—
Saluted, as we passed, an early rook—
The Princess fell asleep, and, in her dream,
Talk’d of one Master Hubert, deep in her esteem.

“About this time,—making delightful way,—
Shed a quill-feather from my larboard wing—
Wish’d, trusted, hoped ’twas no sign of decay—
Thank Heaven, I’m hearty yet!—’twas no such thing:—
At five the golden light began to spring,
With fiery shudder through the bloomed east;
At six we heard Panthea’s churches ring—
The city all his unhived swarms had cast,
To watch our grand approach, and hail us as we pass’d.

“As flowers turn their faces to the sun,
So on our flight with hungry eyes they gaze,
And, as we shaped our course, this, that way run,
With mad-cap pleasure, or hand-clasp’d amaze;
Sweet in the air a mild-toned music plays,
And progresses through its own labyrinth;
Buds gather’d from the green spring’s middle-days,
They scatter’d,—daisy, primrose, hyacinth,—
Or round white columns wreathed from capital to plinth.

“Onward we floated o’er the panting streets,
That seem’d throughout with upheld faces paved;
Look where we will, our bird’s-eye vision meets
Legions of holiday; bright standards waved,
And fluttering ensigns emulously craved
Our minute’s glance; a busy thunderous roar,
From square to square, among the buildings raved,
As when the sea, at flow, gluts up once more
The craggy hollowness of a wild reefed shore.

“And ‘Bellanaine for ever!’ shouted they;
While that fair Princess, from her winged chair,
Bow’d low with high demeanour, and, to pay
Their new-blown loyalty with guerdon fair,
Still emptied, at meet distance, here and there,
A plenty horn of jewels. And here I
(Who wish to give the devil her due) declare
Against that ugly piece of calumny,
Which calls them Highland pebble-stones, not worth a fly.

“Still ‘Bellanaine!’ they shouted, while we glide
’Slant to a light Ionic portico,
The city’s delicacy, and the pride
Of our Imperial Basilic; a row
Of lords and ladies, on each hand, make show
Submissive of knee-bent obeisance,
All down the steps; and as we enter’d, lo!
The strangest sight—the most unlook’d-for chance—
All things turn’d topsy-turvy in a devil’s dance.

“Stead of his anxious Majesty and court
At the open doors, with wide saluting eyes,
Congées and scrape-graces of every sort,
And all the smooth routine of gallantries,
Was seen, to our immoderate surprise,
A motley crowd thick gather’d in the hall,
Lords, scullions, deputy-sculions, with wild cries
Stunning the vestibule from wall to wall,
Where the Chief Justice on his knees and hands doth crawl.

“Counts of the palace, and the state purveyor
Of moth’s-down, to make soft the royal beds,
The Common Council and my fool Lord Mayor
Marching a-row, each other slipshod treads;
Powder’d bag-wigs and ruffy-tuffy heads
Of cinder wenches meet and soil each other;
Toe crush’d with heel ill-natured fighting breeds,
Frill-rumpling elbows brew up many a bother,
And fists in the short ribs keep up the yell and pother.

“A Poet, mounted on the Court-Clown’s back,
Rode to the Princess swift with spurring heels,
And close into her face, with rhyming clack,
Began a Prothalamion;—she reels,
She falls, she faints! while laughter peals
Over her woman’s weakness. ‘Where,’ cried I,
‘Where is his Majesty?’ No person feels
Inclined to answer; wherefore instantly
I plunged into the crowd to find him or to die.

“Jostling my way I gain’d the stairs, and ran
To the first landing, where, incredible!
I met, far gone in liquor, that old man,
That vile impostor Hum,—”

So far, so well,—
For we have proved the Mago never fell
Down stairs on Crafticanto’s evidence;
And therefore duly shall proceed to tell,
Plain in our own original mood and tense,
The sequel of this day, though labour ’tis immense.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

(NOVEMBER—DECEMBER, 1819)

*Lines supposed to have been addressed
to Fanny Brawne*

THIS living hand, now warm and capable
Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
And in the icy silence of the tomb,
So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights
That thou would[st] wish thine own heart dry of blood
So in my veins red life might stream again,
And thou be conscience-calm'd—see here it is—
I hold it towards you.

(WINTER, 1819-1820)

1820

His last Sonnet

BRIGHT star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still stead fast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

(1820)



THE END
21 FEBRUARY, 1820
ROME

APPENDIX
OTHO THE GREAT

Otho the Great

Dramatis Personæ

OTHO THE GREAT, EMPEROR OF GERMANY

LUDOLPH, HIS SON

CONRAD, DUKE OF FRANCONIA

ALBERT, A KNIGHT, FAVOURED BY OTHO

SIGIFRED, AN OFFICER, FRIEND OF LUDOLPH

THEODORE }

GONFRED }

ETHELBERT, AN ABBOT

GERSA, PRINCE OF HUNGARY

AN HUNGARIAN CAPTAIN

PHYSICIAN

PAGE

NOBLES, KNIGHTS, ATTENDANTS AND SOLDIERS

ERMINIA, NIECE OF OTHO

AURANTHE, CONRAD'S SISTER

LADIES AND ATTENDANTS

Scene

THE CASTLE OF FRIEDBURG, ITS VICINITY, AND THE HUNGARIAN CAMP

Time

ONE DAY

Otho the Great

ACT I

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Enter CONRAD.

So, I am safe emerged from these broils!
Amid the wreck of thousands I am whole;
For every crime I have a laurel-wreath,
For every lie a lordship. Nor yet has
My ship of fortune furl'd her silken sails,—
Let her glide on! This danger'd neck is saved,
By dexterous policy, from the rebel's axe;
And of my ducal palace not one stone
Is bruised by the Hungarian petards.
Toil hard, ye slaves, and from the miser-earth
Bring forth once more my bullion, treasured deep,
With all my jewell'd salvers, silver and gold,
And precious goblets that make rich the wine.
But why do I stand babbling to myself?
Where is Auranthe; I have news for her
Shall——

Enter AURANTHE.

AURANTHE. Conrad! what tidings? Good, if I may guess
From your alert eyes and high-lifted brows.

What tidings of the battle? Albert? Ludolph? Otho?

CONRAD. You guess aright. And, sister, slurring o'er
Our by-gone quarrels, I confess my heart

Is beating with a child's anxiety,
To make our golden fortune known to you.

AURANTHE. So serious?

CONRAD. Yes, so serious, that before
I utter even the shadow of a hint

Concerning what will make that sin-worn cheek
Blush joyous blood through every lineament,
You must make here a solemn vow to me.

AURANTHE. I pr'ythee, Conrad, do not overact
The hypocrite. What vow would you impose?

CONRAD. Trust me for once. That you may be assured
'Tis not confiding in a broken reed,

A poor court-bankrupt, outwitted and lost,
Revolve these facts in your acutest mood,
In such a mood as now you listen to me:
A few days since, I was an open rebel,—
Against the Emperor had suborned his son,—
Drawn off his nobles to revolt,—and shown
Contented fools causes for discontent,
Fresh hatch'd in my ambition's eagle-nest;
So thrived I as a rebel,—and, behold!
Now I am Otho's favourite, his dear friend,
His right hand, his brave Conrad!

AURANTHE. I confess
You have intrigued with these unsteady times
To admiration. But to be a favourite!

CONRAD. I saw my moment. The Hungarians,
Collected silently in holes and corners,
Appear'd, a sudden host, in the open day.
I should have perish'd in our empire's wreck,
But, calling interest loyalty, swore faith
To most believing Otho; and so helped
His blood-stain'd ensigns to the victory
In yesterday's hard fight, that it has turn'd
The edge of his sharp wrath to eager kindness.

AURANTHE. So far yourself. But what is this to me
More than that I am glad; I gratulate you.

CONRAD. Yes, sister, but it does regard you greatly,
Nearly, momentarily,—aye, painfully!
Make me this vow——

AURANTHE. Concerning whom or what?

CONRAD. Albert!

AURANTHE. I would inquire somewhat of him.
You had a letter from me touching him?
No treason 'gainst his head in deed or word!
Surely you spared him at my earnest prayer?
Give me the letter—it should not exist.

CONRAD. At one pernicious charge of the enemy
I for a moment-whiles, was prisoner ta'en
And rifled,—stuff! the horse's hoofs have minced it!

AURANTHE. He is alive?

CONRAD. He is! but here make oath
To alienate him from your scheming brain,
Divorce him from your solitary thoughts,

And cloud him in such utter banishment,
That when his person meets again your eye
Your vision shall quite lose its memory,
And wander past him as through vacancy.

AURANTHE. I'll not be perjured.

CONRAD. No, nor great, nor mighty;
You would not wear a crown, or rule a kingdom.
To you it is indifferent?

AURANTHE. What means this?

CONRAD. You'll not be perjured! Go to Albert then,
That camp-mushroom—dishonour of our house.
Go, page his dusty heels upon a march,
Furbish his jingling baldrick while he sleeps,
And share his mouldy ration in a siege.
Yet stay,—perhaps a charm may call you back,
And make the widening circlets of your eyes
Sparkle with healthy fevers.—The Emperor
Hath given consent that you should marry Ludolph!

AURANTHE. Can it be, brother? For a golden crown
With a queen's awful lips I doubly thank you!
This is to wake in Paradise! Farewell,
Thou clod of yesterday!—'twas not myself!
Not till this moment did I ever feel
My spirit's faculties! I'll flatter you
For this, and be you ever proud of it;
Thou, Jove-like, struck'st thy forehead,
And from the teeming marrow of thy brain
I spring complete Minerva! But the prince—
His highness Ludolph—where is he?

CONRAD. I know not:

When, lackeying my counsel at a beck,
The rebel lords, on bended knees, received
The Emperor's pardon, Ludolph kept aloof,
Sole, in a stiff, fool-hardy, sulky pride;
Yet, for all this, I never saw a father
In such a sickly longing for his son.
We shall soon see him; for the Emperor
He will be here this morning.

AURANTHE. That I heard
Among the midnight rumours from the camp.

CONRAD. You give up Albert to me?

AURANTHE. Harm him not!
E'en for his highness Ludolph's sceptry hand,
I would not Albert suffer any wrong.

CONRAD. Have I not laboured, plotted——?

AURANTHE. See you spare him:
Nor be pathetic, my kind benefactor!
On all the many bounties of your hand,
'Twas for yourself you laboured—not for me!
Do you not count, when I am queen, to take
Advantage of your chance discoveries
Of my poor secrets, and so hold a rod
Over my life?

CONRAD. Let not this slave—this villain—
Be cause of feud between us. See! he comes!
Look, woman, look, your Albert is quite safe!
In haste it seems. Now shall I be in the way,
And wish'd with silent curses in my grave,
Or side by side with 'whelmed mariners.

Enter ALBERT.

ALBERT. Fair on your graces fall this early morrow!
So it is like to do, without my prayers,
For your right noble names, like favourite tunes,
Have fallen full frequent from our Emperor's lips,
High commented with smiles.

AURANTHE. Noble Albert!

CONRAD (*aside*). Noble!

AURANTHE. Such salutation argues a glad heart
In our prosperity. We thank you, sir.

ALBERT. Lady! O, would to Heaven your poor servant
Could do you better service than mere words!
But I have other greeting than mine own,—
From no less man than Otho, who has sent
This ring as pledge of dearest amity;
'Tis chosen, I hear, from Hymen's jewel'ry,
And you will prize it, lady, I doubt not,
Beyond all pleasures past, and all to come.
To you, great duke—

CONRAD. To me! What of me, ha?

ALBERT. What pleased your grace to say?

CONRAD. Your message, sir!

ALBERT. You mean not this to me?

CONRAD. Sister, this way;
For there shall be no "gentle Alberts" now, [Aside.
No "sweet Auranthes!"

[Exeunt CONRAD and AURANTHE.

ALBERT (*solus*). The duke is out of temper; if he knows
More than a brother of a sister ought
I should not quarrel with his peevishness.
Auranthe—Heaven preserve her always fair!—
Is in the heady, proud, ambitious vein;
I bicker not with her,—bid her farewell;
She has taken flight from me, then let her soar,—
He is a fool who stands at pining gaze!
But for poor Ludolph, he is food for sorrow:
No levelling bluster of my licensed thoughts,
No military swagger of my mind,
Can smother from myself the wrong I've done him,—
Without design, indeed,—yet it is so,—
And opiate for the conscience have I none! [Exit.

SCENE II.—*The Court-yard of the Castle.*

*Martial Music. Enter, from the outer gate, OTHO, Nobles, Knights,
and Attendants. The Soldiers halt at the gate, with Banners
in sight.*

OTHO. Where is my noble herald?

*Enter CONRAD from the Castle, attended by two Knights
and Servants. ALBERT following.*

Well, hast told

Auranthe our intent imperial?
Lest our rent banners, too o' the sudden shown,
Should fright her silken casements and dismay
Her household to our lack of entertainment.
A victory!

CONRAD. God save illustrious Otho!

OTHO. Aye, Conrad, it will pluck out all grey hairs;
It is the best physician for the spleen;
The courtliest inviter to a feast;
The subtlest excuser of small faults;
And a nice judge in the age and smack of wine.

Enter, from the Castle, AURANTHE, followed by Pages holding up her robes, and a train of Women. She kneels.

Hail my sweet hostess! I do thank the stars,
Or my good soldiers, or their ladies' eyes,
That, after such a merry battle fought,
I can, all safe in body and in soul,
Kiss your fair hand and lady fortune's too.
My ring! now, on my life, it doth rejoice
These lips to feel 't on this soft ivory!
Keep it, my brightest daughter; it may prove
The little prologue to a line of kings.
I strove against thee and my hot-blood son,
Dull blockhead that I was to be so blind;
But now my sight is clear; forgive me, lady.

AURANTHE. My lord, I was a vassal to your frown,
And now your favour makes me but more humble;
In wintry winds the simple snow is safe,
But fadeth at the greeting of the sun:
Unto thine anger I might well have spoken,
Taking on me a woman's privilege,
But this so sudden kindness makes me dumb.

OTHO. What need of this? Enough, if you will be
A potent tutoress to my wayward boy,
And teach him, what it seems his nurse could not,
To say, for once, I thank you. Sigifred!

ALBERT. He has not yet returned, my gracious liege.

OTHO. What then! No tidings of my friendly Arab?

CONRAD. None, mighty Otho.

[To one of his Knights, who goes out.]

Send forth instantly
An hundred horsemen from my honoured gates,
To scour the plains and search the cottages.
Cry a reward to him who shall first bring
News of that vanished Arabian,—
A full-heaped helmet of the purest gold.

OTHO. More thanks, good Conrad; for, except my son's,
There is no face I rather would behold
Than that same quick-eyed pagan's. By the saints,
This coming night of banquets must not light
Her dazzling torches; nor the music breathe

OTHO.

Say, what noise is that!

[ALBERT *advancing from the back of the Stage, whither he had hastened on hearing the cheers of the soldiery.*

ALBERT. It is young Gersa, the Hungarian prince,
Pick'd like a red stag from the fallow herd
Of prisoners. Poor prince, forlorn he steps,
Slow, and demure, and proud in his despair.
If I may judge by his so tragic bearing,
His eye not downcast, and his folded arm,
He doth this moment wish himself asleep
Among his fallen captains on yon plains.

Enter GERSA, in chains, and guarded.

OTHO. Well said, Sir Albert.

GERSA. Not a word of greeting?
No welcome to a princely visitor,
Most mighty Otho? Will not my great host
Vouchsafe a syllable, before he bids
His gentlemen conduct me with all care
To some securest lodging—cold perhaps!

OTHO. What mood is this? Hath fortune touch'd thy brain?

GERSA. O kings and princes of this fev'rous world,
What abject things, what mockeries must ye be,
What nerveless minions of safe palaces,
When here, a monarch, whose proud foot is used
To fallen princes' necks as to his stirrup,
Must needs exclaim that I am mad forsooth,
Because I cannot flatter with bent knees
My conqueror!

OTHO. Gersa, I think you wrong me:
I think I have a better fame abroad.

GERSA. I prythee mock me not with gentle speech,
But, as a favour, bid me from thy presence?
Let me no longer be the wondering food
Of all these eyes; prythee, command me hence!

OTHO. Do not mistake me, Gersa. That you may not,
Come, fair Auranthe, try if your soft hands
Can manage those hard rivets to set free
So brave a prince and soldier.

AURANTHE (*sets him free*). Welcome task!

GERSA. I am wound up in deep astonishment!
Thank you, fair lady. Otho! emperor!
You rob me of myself; my dignity
Is now your infant; I am a weak child.

OTHO. Give me your hand, and let this kindly grasp
Live in our memories.

GERSA. In mine it will.
I blush to think of my unchasten'd tongue;
But I was haunted by the monstrous ghost
Of all our slain battalions. Sire, reflect,
And pardon you will grant, that, at this hour,
The bruised remnants of our stricken camp
Are huddling undistinguished my dear friends,
With common thousands, into shallow graves.

OTHO. Enough, most noble Gersa. You are free
To cheer the brave remainder of your host
By your own healing presence, and that too,
Not as their leader merely, but their king;
For, as I hear, the wily enemy
Who eas'd the crownet from your infant brows,
Bloody Taraxa, is among the dead.

GERSA. Then I retire, so generous Otho please,
Bearing with me a weight of benefits
Too heavy to be borne.

OTHO. It is not so;
Still understand me, King of Hungary,
Nor judge my open purposes awry.
Though I did hold you high in my esteem
For your self's sake, I do not personate
The stage-play emperor to entrap applause,
To set the silly sort o' the world agape,
And make the politic smile; no, I have heard
How in the Council you condemn'd this war,
Urging the perfidy of broken faith,—
For that I am your friend.

GERSA. If ever, sire,
You are my enemy, I dare here swear
'Twill not be Gersa's fault. Otho, farewell!

OTHO. Will you return, Prince, to our banqueting?

GERSA. As to my father's board I will return.

OTHO. Conrad, with all due ceremony, give
The prince a regal escort to his camp;
Albert, go thou and bear him company.
Gersa, farewell!

GERSA. All happiness attend you!

OTHO. Return with what good speed you may; for soon
We must consult upon our terms of peace.

[Exeunt GERSA and ALBERT with others.]

And thus a marble column do I build
To prop my empire's dome. Conrad, in thee
I have another steadfast one, to uphold
The portals of my state; and, for my own
Pre-eminence and safety, I will strive
To keep thy strength upon its pedestal.
For, without thee, this day I might have been
A show-monster about the streets of Prague,
In chains, as just now stood that noble prince:
And then to me no mercy had been shown,
For when the conquer'd lion is once dungeoned,
Who lets him forth again, or dares to give
An old lion sugar-cates of mild reprieve?
Not to thine ear alone I make confession,
But to all here, as by experience,
I know how the great basement of all power
Is frankness, and a true tongue to the world;
And how intriguing secrecy is proof
Of fear and weakness, and a hollow state.
Conrad, I owe thee much.

CONRAD. To kiss that hand,
My Emperor, is ample recompense
For a mere act of duty.

OTHO. Thou art wrong;
For what can any man on earth do more?
We will make trial of your house's welcome,
My bright Auranthe!

CONRAD. How is Friedburg honoured!

Enter ETHELBERT and six Monks.

ETHELBERT. The benison of Heaven on your head,
Imperial Otho!

OTHO. Who stays me? Speak! Quick!

ETHELBERT. Pause but one moment, mighty conqueror!
Upon the threshold of this house of joy.

OTHO. Pray, do not prose, good Ethelbert, but speak,
What is your purpose.

ETHELBERT. The restoration of some captive maids,
Devoted to Heaven's pious ministries,
Who, driven forth from their religious cells
And kept in thralldom by our enemy,
When late this province was a lawless spoil,
Still weep amid the wild Hungarian camp,
Though hemm'd around by thy victorious arms.

OTHO. Demand the holy sisterhood in our name
From Gersa's tents. Farewell, old Ethelbert.

ETHELBERT. The saints will bless you for this pious care.

OTHO. Daughter, your hand; Ludolph's would fit it best.

CONRAD. Ho! let the music sound!

[*Music.* ETHELBERT raises his hands, as in benediction of

OTHO *Exeunt severally. The scene closes on them.*

SCENE III.—*The Country, with the Castle in the distance.*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.

LUDOLPH. You have my secret; let it not be breath'd.

SIGIFRED. Still give me leave to wonder that the Prince
Ludolph and the swift Arab are the same;
Still to rejoice that 'twas a German arm
Death doing in a turban'd masquerade.

LUDOLPH. The Emperor must not know it, Sigifred.

SIGIFRED. I prythee, why? What happier hour of time
Could thy pleased star point down upon from heaven
With silver index, bidding thee make peace?

LUDOLPH. Still, it must not be known, good Sigifred;
The star may point oblique.

SIGIFRED. If Otho knew
His son to be that unknown Mussulman
After whose spurring heels he sent me forth,
With one of his well-pleased Olympian oaths,
The charters of man's greatness, at this hour
He would be watching round the castle walls,
And, like an anxious warder, strain his sight
For the first glimpse of such a son return'd—

Ludolph!—that blast of the Hungarians,
That Saracenic meteor of the fight,
That silent fury, whose fell scymitar
Kept danger all aloof from Otho's head,
And left him space for wonder.

LUDOLPH. Say no more.
Not as a swordsman would I pardon claim,
But as a son. The bronzed centurion,
Long toil'd in foreign wars, and whose high deeds
Are shaded in a forest of tall spears,
Known only to his troop, hath greater plea
Of favour with my sire than I can have.

SIGIFRED. My lord, forgive me that I cannot see
How this proud temper with clear reason squares.
What made you then, with such an anxious love,
Hover around that life, whose bitter days
You vex with bad revolt? Was 't opium,
Or the mad-fumed wine? Nay, do not frown,
I rather would grieve with you than upbraid.

LUDOLPH. I do believe you. No, 'twas not to make
A father his son's debtor, or to heal
His deep heart-sickness for a rebel child.
'Twas done in memory of my boyish days,
Poor cancel for his kindness to my youth,
For all his calming of my childish griefs,
And all his smiles upon my merriment.
No, not a thousand foughten fields could sponge
Those days paternal from my memory,
Though now upon my head he heaps disgrace.

SIGIFRED. My Prince, you think too harshly—

LUDOLPH. Can I so?
Hath he not gall'd my spirit to the quirk?
And with a sullen rigour obstinate
Pour'd out a phial of wrath upon my faults,
Hunted me as the Tartar does the boar,
Driven me to the very edge o' the world,
And almost put a price upon my head?

SIGIFRED. Remember how he spared the rebel lords.

LUDOLPH. Yes, yes, I know he hath a noble nature
That cannot trample on the fallen. But his
Is not the only proud heart in his realm.
He hath wrong'd me, and I have done him wrong;

He hath loved me, and I have shown him kindness;
We should be almost equal.

SIGIFRED. Yet for all this,
I would you have appear'd among those lords,
And ta'en his favour.

LUDOLPH. Ha! Till now I thought
My friend had held poor Ludolph's honour dear.
What! Would you have me sue before his throne
And kiss the courtier's missal, its silk steps?
Or hug the golden housings of his steed,
Amid a camp whose steeled swarms I dared
But yesterday? and, at the trumpet sound,
Bow, like some unknown mercenary's flag,
And lick the soiled grass? No, no, my friend,
I would not, I, be pardon'd in the heap,
And bless indemnity with all that scum—
Those men I mean, who on my shoulders propp'd
Their weak rebellion, winning me with lies,
And pitying forsooth my many wrongs;
Poor self-deceived wretches, who must think
Each one himself a king in embryo,
Because some dozen vassals cry'd, My lord!
Cowards, who never knew their little hearts
Till flurried danger held the mirror up,
And then they own'd themselves without a blush,
Curling, like spaniels, round my father's feet.
Such things deserted me and are forgiven,
While I, least guilty, am an outcast still,—
And will be, for I love such fair disgrace.

SIGIFRED. I know the clear truth; so would Otho see,
For he is just and noble. Fain would I
Be pleader for you—

LUDOLPH. He'll hear none of it;
You know his temper, hot, proud, obstinate;
Endanger not yourself so uselessly.
I will encounter his thwart spleen myself,
To-day, at the Duke Conrad's, where he keeps
His crowded state after the victory.
There will I be, a most unwelcome guest,
And parley with him, as a son should do
Who doubly loathes a father's tyranny;
Tell him how feeble is that tyranny;

How the relationship of father and son
Is no more valid than a silken leash
Where lions tug adverse, if love grow not
From interchanged love through many years.
Ay, and those turreted Franconian walls,
Like to a jealous casket, hold my pearl—
My fair Auranthe! Yes, I will be there.

SIGIFRED. Be not so rash; wait till his wrath shall pass,
Until his royal spirit softly ebbs,
Self-influenced; then, in his morning dreams
He will forgive thee, and awake in grief
To have not thy good-morrow.

LUDOLPH. Yes, to-day
I must be there, while her young pulses beat
Among the new-plumed minions of the war.
Have you seen her of late? No? Auranthe,
Franconia's fair sister, 'tis I mean.
She should be paler for my troublous days—
And there it is—my father's iron lips
Have sworn divorcement 'twixt me and my right.

SIGIFRED (*aside*). Auranthe! I had hoped this whim had pass'd.

LUDOLPH. And, Sigifred, with all his love of justice,
When will he take that grandchild in his arms,
That, by my love I swear, shall soon be his?
This reconciliation is impossible,
For see—but who are these?

SIGIFRED. They are messengers
From our great emperor; to you, I doubt not.
For couriers are abroad to seek you out.

Enter THEODORE and GONFRED.

THEODORE. Seeing so many vigilant eyes explore
The province to invite your highness back
To your high dignities, we are too happy.

GONFRED. We have no eloquence to colour justly
The emperor's anxious wishes.

LUDOLPH. Go. I follow you.

[*Exeunt THEODORE and GONFRED.*]

I play the prude: it is but venturing—
Why should he be so earnest? Come, my friend,
Let us to Friedburg castle.

ACT II

SCENE I.—*An Ante-chamber in the Castle.*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.

LUDOLPH. No more advices, no more cautioning;
I leave it all to fate—to any thing!
I cannot square my conduct to time, place,
Or circumstance; to me 'tis all a mist!

SIGIFRED. I say no more.

LUDOLPH. It seems I am to wait
Here in the ante-room;—that may be a trifle.
You see now how I dance attendance here,
Without that tyrant temper, you so blame,
Snapping the rein. You have medicin'd me
With good advices; and I here remain,
In this most honourable ante-room,
Your patient scholar.

SIGIFRED. Do not wrong me, Prince.
By heavens, I'd rather kiss Duke Conrad's slipper,
When in the morning he doth yawn with pride,
Than see you humbled but a half-degree!
Truth is, the Emperor would fain dismiss
The nobles ere he sees you.

Enter GONFRED, from the Council-room.

LUDOLPH. Well, sir! what?

GONFRED. Great honour to the Prince! The Emperor,
Hearing that his brave son had re-appeared,
Instant dismiss'd the Council from his sight,
As Jove fans off the clouds. Even now they pass.

[*Exit.*

*Enter the Nobles from the Council-room. They cross the stage,
bowing with respect to LUDOLPH, he frowning on them.
CONRAD follows. Exeunt Nobles.*

LUDOLPH. Not the discoloured poisons of a fen,
Which he who breathes feels warning of his death,
Could taste so nauseous to the bodily sense,
As these prodigious sycophants disgust
The soul's fine palate.

CONRAD. Princely Ludolph, hail!
Welcome, thou younger sceptre to the realm!
Strength to thy virgin crownnet's golden buds,
That they, against the winter of thy sire,
May burst, and swell, and flourish round thy brows,
Maturing to a weighty diadem!
Yet be that hour far off; and may he live,
Who waits for thee, as the chapp'd earth for rain.
Set my life's star! I have lived long enough,
Since under my glad roof, propitiously,
Father and son each other repossess.

LUDOLPH. Fine wording, Duke! but words could never yet
Forestall the fates; have you not learnt that yet?
Let me look well: your features are the same;
Your gait the same; your hair of the same shade;
As one I knew some passed weeks ago,
Who sung far different notes into mine ears.
I have mine own particular comments on 't;
You have your own, perhaps.

CONRAD. My gracious Prince,
All men may err. In truth I was deceived
In your great father's nature, as you were.
Had I known that of him I have since known,
And what you soon will learn, I would have turn'd
My sword to my own throat, rather than held
Its threatening edge against a good King's quiet:
Or with one word fever'd you, gentle Prince,
Who seem'd to me, as rugged times then went,
Indeed too much oppress'd. May I be bold
To tell the Emperor you will haste to him?

LUDOLPH. Your Dukedom's privilege will grant so much.
[Exit CONRAD]

He's very close to Otho,—a tight leech!
Your hand—I go. Ha! here the thunder comes
Sullen against the wind! If in two angry brows
My safety lies, then, Sigifred, I'm safe.

Enter OTHO and CONRAD.

OTHO. Will you make Titan play the lackey-page
To chattering pigmies? I would have you know
That such neglect of our high Majesty

Annuls all feel of kindred. What is son,—
Or friend,—or brother,—or all ties of blood,—
When the whole kingdom, centred in ourself,
Is rudely slighted? Who am I to wait?
By Peter's chair! I have upon my tongue
A word to fright the proudest spirit here!—
Death!—and slow tortures to the hardy fool
Who dares take such large charter from our smiles!
Conrad, we would be private. Sigifred,
Off! And none pass this way on pain of death!

[*Exeunt* CONRAD and SIGIFRED.]

LUDOLPH. This was but half expected, my good sire,
Yet I am grieved at it, to the full height,
As though my hopes of favour had been whole.

OTHO. How you indulge yourself! What can you hope for?

LUDOLPH. Nothing, my liege; I have to hope for nothing.
I come to greet you as a loving son,
And then depart, if I may be so free,
Seeing that blood of yours in my warm veins
Has not yet mitigated into milk.

OTHO. What would you, sir?

LUDOLPH. A lenient banishment.

So please you, let me unmolested pass
This Conrad's gates to the wide air again.
I want no more. A rebel wants no more.

OTHO. And shall I let a rebel loose again
To muster kites and eagles 'gainst my head?
No, obstinate boy, you shall be kept caged up,
Served with harsh food, with scum for Sunday drink.

LUDOLPH. Indeed!

OTHO. And chains too heavy for your life:
I'll choose a gaoler whose swart monstrous face
Shall be a hell to look upon, and she——

LUDOLPH. Ha!

OTHO. Shall be your fair Auranthe.

LUDOLPH.

Amaze! Amaze!

OTHO. To-day you marry her.

LUDOLPH.

This is a sharp jest!

OTHO. No. None at all. When have I said a lie?

LUDOLPH. If I sleep not, I am a waking wretch.

OTHO. Not a word more. Let me embrace my child.

LUDOLPH. I dare not. 'Twould pollute so good a father!
O heavy crime!—that your son's blinded eyes
Could not see all his parent's love aright,
As now I see it! Be not kind to me—
Punish me not with favour.

OTH. Are you sure,
Ludolph, you have no saving plea in store?

LUDOLPH. My father, none!

OTH. Then you astonish me.

LUDOLPH. No, I have no plea. Disobedience,
Rebellion, obstinacy, blasphemy,
Are all my counsellors. If they can make
My crooked deeds show good and plausible,
Then grant me loving pardon, but not else,
Good gods! not else, in any way, my liege!

OTH. You are a most perplexing, noble boy.

LUDOLPH. You not less a perplexing noble father.

OTH. Well, you shall have free passport through the gates.
Farewell!

LUDOLPH. Farewell! and by these tears believe,
And still remember, I repent in pain
All my misdeeds!

OTH. Ludolph, I will! I will!
But Ludolph, ere you go, I would enquire
If you, in all your wandering, ever met
A certain Arab haunting in these parts.

LUDOLPH. No, my good lord, I cannot say I did.

OTH. Make not your father blind before his time;
Nor let these arms paternal hunger more
For an embrace, to dull the appetite
Of my great love for thee, my supreme child!
Come close, and let me breathe into thine ear.
I knew you through disguise. You are the Arab!
You can't deny it. *[Embracing him.]*

LUDOLPH. Happiest of days!

OTH. We'll make it so.

LUDOLPH. 'Stead of one fatted calf
Ten hecatombs shall bellow out their last,
Smote 'twixt the horns by the death-stunning mace
Of Mars, and all the soldiery shall feast
Nobly as Nimrod's masons, when the towers
Of Nineveh new kiss'd the parted clouds!

OTHO. Large as a God speak out, where all is thine.

LUDOLPH. Ay, father, but the fire in my sad breast
Is quench'd with inward tears! I must rejoice
For you, whose wings so shadow over me
In tender victory, but for myself
I still must mourn. The fair Auranthe mine!
Too great a boon! I prythee let me ask
What more than I know of could so have changed
Your purpose touching her?

OTHO. At a word, this:

In no deed did you give me more offence
Than your rejection of Erminia.
To my appalling, I saw too good proof
Of your keen-eyed suspicion,—she is naught.

LUDOLPH. You are convinc'd?

OTHO. Ay, spite of her sweet looks.

O that my brother's daughter should so fall!
Her fame has pass'd into the grosser lips
Of soldiers in their cups.

LUDOLPH. 'Tis very sad.

OTHO. No more of her. Auranthe—Ludolph, come!
This marriage be the bond of endless peace!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The entrance of GERSA's Tent in the
Hungarian Camp.*

Enter ERMINIA.

ERMINIA. Where—where—where shall I find a messenger?
A trusty soul—a good man, in the camp?
Shall I go myself? Monstrous wickedness!
O cursed Conrad! devilish Auranthe!
Here is proof palpable as the bright sun!
O for a voice to reach the Emperor's ears!

[*Shouts in the Camp.*]

Enter an HUNGARIAN CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN. Fair prisoner, you hear these joyous shouts?
The King—aye, now our King—but still your slave,
Young Gersa, from a short captivity
Has just return'd. He bids me say, bright dame,
That even the homage of his ranged chiefs

Cures not his keen impatience to behold
Such beauty once again. What ails you, lady?

ERMINIA. Say, is not that a German, yonder? There!

CAPTAIN. Methinks by his stout bearing he should be;
Yes—it is Albert; a brave German Knight,
And much in the Emperor's favour.

ERMINIA. I would fain
Inquire of friends and kinsfolk,—how they fared
In these rough times. Brave soldier, as you pass
To royal Gersa with my humble thanks,
Will you send yonder knight to me?

CAPTAIN. I will.

[Exit.

ERMINIA. Yes, he was ever known to be a man
Frank, open, generous; Albert, I may trust.
O proof! proof! proof! Albert's an honest man;
Not Ethelbert the monk, if he were here,
Would I hold more trustworthy. Now!

Enter ALBERT.

ALBERT. Good gods!
Lady Erminia! are you prisoner
In this beleaguer'd camp? or are you here
Of your own will? You pleased to send for me.
By Venus, 'tis a pity I knew not
Your plight before, and, by her son, I swear
To do you every service you can ask.
What would the fairest—?

ERMINIA. Albert, will you swear?

ALBERT. I have. Well?

ERMINIA. Albert, you have fame to lose.
If men, in court and camp, lie not outright,
You should be, from a thousand, chosen forth
To do an honest deed. Shall I confide—?

ALBERT. Aye, anything to me, fair creature. Do;
Dictate my task. Sweet woman,—

ERMINIA. Truce with that.
You understand me not; and, in your speech,
I see how far the slander is abroad.

Without proof could you think me innocent?

ALBERT. Lady, I should rejoice to know you so.

ERMINIA. If you have any pity for a maid

Suffering a daily death from evil tongues;
Any compassion for that Emperor's niece
Who, for your bright sword and clear honesty,
Lifted you from the crowd of common men
Into the lap of honour,—save me, knight!

ALBERT. How? Make it clear; if it be possible,
I, by the banner of Saint Maurice, swear
To right you.

ERMINIA. Possible!—Easy. O my heart!
This letter's not so soil'd but you may read it;—
Possible! There—that letter! Read—read it.

[*Gives him a letter.*]

ALBERT (*reading*).

“To the Duke Conrad.—Forget the threat you made at parting and I will forget to send the Emperor letters and papers of yours I have become possessed of. His life is no trifle to me; his death you shall find none to yourself.”

(*Speaks to himself*;) ‘Tis me—my life that’s pleaded for!

(*Reads.*)

“He, for his own sake, will be dumb as the grave.
Erminia has my shame fixed upon her, sure as a wen.
We are safe.”

AURANTHE.”

A she-devil! A dragon! I her imp!
Fire of hell! Auranthe—lewd demon!
Where got you this? Where? when?

ERMINIA. I found it in the tent, among some spoils
Which, being noble, fell to Gersa’s lot.

Come in, and see. [They go in and return.]

ALBERT. Villainy! Villainy!
Conrad’s sword, his corslet and his helm,
And his letter. Caitiff, he shall feel—

ERMINIA. I see you are thunderstruck. Haste, haste, away!

ALBERT. O I am tortured by this villainy.

ERMINIA. You needs must be. Carry it swift to Otho;
Tell him, moreover, I am prisoner
Here in this camp, where all the sisterhood,
Forced from their quiet cells, are parcell’d out
For slaves among these Huns. Away! Away!

ALBERT. I am gone.

ERMINIA. Swift be your steed! Within this hour
The Emperor will see it.

ALBERT. Ere I sleep:
That I can swear. [Hurries out.]

GERSA (*without*). Brave captains! thanks. Enough
Of loyal homage now!

Enter GERSA.

ERMINIA. Hail, royal Hun!

GERSA. What means this, fair one? Why in such alarm?
Who was it hurried by me so distract?

It seem'd you were in deep discourse together;

Your doctrine has not been so harsh to him

As to my poor deserts. Come, come, be plain.

I am no jealous fool to kill you both,

Or, for such trifles, rob th' adorned world

Of such a beauteous vestal.

ERMINIA. I grieve, my lord,
To hear you condescend to ribald phrase.

GERSA. This is too much! Hearken, my lady pure!

ERMINIA. Silence! and hear the magic of a name—
Erminia! I am she,—the Emperor's niece!

Praised be the heavens, I now dare own myself!

GERSA. Erminia! Indeed! I've heard of her.
Prythee, fair lady, what chance brought you here?

ERMINIA. Ask your own soldiers.

GERSA. And you dare own your name
For loveliness you may—and for the rest
My vein is not censorious.

ERMINIA. Alas! poor me!
'Tis false indeed.

GERSA. Indeed you are too fair:
The swan, soft leaning on her fledgy breast,
When to the stream she launches, looks not back
With such a tender grace; nor are her wings
So white as your soul is, if that but be
Twin picture to your face. Erminia!
To-day, for the first time, I am a king,
Yet would I give my unworn crown away
To know you spotless.

ERMINIA. Trust me one day more,
Generously, without more certain guarantee

Than this poor face you deign to praise so much;
After that, say and do whate'er you please.
If I have any knowledge of you, sir,
I think, nay I am sure, you will grieve much
To hear my story. O be gentle to me,
For I am sick and faint with many wrongs,
Tired out, and weary-worn with contumelies.
GERSA. Poor lady!

Enter ETHELBERT.

ERMINIA. Gentle Prince, 'tis false indeed.
Good morrow, holy father! I have had
Your prayers, though I look'd for you in vain.

ETHELBERT. Blessings upon you, daughter! Sure you look
Too cheerful for these foul pernicious days.
Young man, you heard this virgin say 'twas false,—
'Tis false, I say. What! can you not employ
Your temper elsewhere, 'mong these burly tents,
But you must taunt this dove, for she hath lost
The Eagle Otho to beat off assault?
Fie! fie! But I will be her guard myself;
I' the Emperor's name. I here demand of you
Herself, and all her sisterhood. She false!

GERSA. Peace! peace, old man! I cannot think she is.

ETHELBERT. Whom I have known from her first infancy,
Baptized her in the bosom of the Church,
Watch'd her, as anxious husbandmen the grain,
From the first shoot till the unripe mid-May,
Then to the tender ear of her June days,
Which, lifting sweet abroad its timid green,
Is blighted by the touch of calumny!
You cannot credit such a monstrous tale?

GERSA. I cannot. Take her. Fair Erminia,
I follow you to Friedburg,—is't not so?

ERMINIA. Aye, so we purpose.

ETHELBERT. Daughter, do you so?
How's this? I marvel! Yet you look not mad.

ERMINIA. I have good news to tell you, Ethelbert.

GERSA. Ho! ho, there! Guards!
Your blessing, father! Sweet Erminia,
Believe me, I am well nigh sure—

ERMINIA. Farewell!
 Short time will show. [Enter Chiefs.
 Yes, father Ethelbert,
 I have news precious as we pass along.
 ETHELBERT. Dear daughter, you shall guide me.
 ERMINIA. To no ill.
 GERSA. Command an escort to the Friedburg lines.
 [Exeunt Chiefs.]

Pray let me lead. Fair lady, forget not
 Gersa, how he believed you innocent.
 I follow you to Friedburg with all speed.
 [Exeunt.]

ACT III

SCENE I.—*The Country.*

Enter ALBERT.

ALBERT. O that the earth were empty, as when Cain
 Had no perplexity to hide his head!
 Or that the sword of some brave enemy
 Had put a sudden stop to my hot breath,
 And hurl'd me down the illimitable gulf
 Of times past, unremember'd! Better so
 Than thus fast-limed in a cursed snare,—
 The white limbs of a wanton. This the end
 Of an aspiring life! My boyhood past
 In feud with wolves and bears, when no eye saw
 The solitary warfare, fought for love
 Of honour 'mid the growling wilderness;
 My sturdier youth, maturing to the sword,
 Won by the syren-trumpets, and the ring
 Of shields upon the pavement, when bright-mail'd
 Henry the Fowler pass'd the streets of Prague.
 Was't to this end I louted and became
 The menial of Mars, and held a spear,
 Sway'd by command, as corn is by the wind?
 Is it for this, I now am lifted up
 By Europe's throned Emperor, to see
 My honour be my executioner,—
 My love of fame, my prided honesty,

Put to the torture for confessional?
Then the damn'd crime of blurring to the world
A woman's secret!—though a fiend she be,
Too tender of my ignominious life;
But then to wrong the generous Emperor
In such a searching point, were to give up
My soul for foot-ball at hell's holiday!
I must confess,—and cut my throat,—to-day?
To-morrow? Ho! some wine!

Enter SIGIFRED.

SIGIFRED. A fine humour——

ALBERT. Who goes there? Count Sigifred? Ha! ha!

SIGIFRED. What, man, do you mistake the hollow sky
For a throng'd tavern, and these stubbed trees
For old serge hangings,—me, your humble friend,
For a poor waiter? Why, man, how you stare!
What Gipsies have you been carousing with?
No, no more wine; methinks you've had enough.

ALBERT. You well may laugh and banter. What a fool
An injury may make of a staid man!
You shall know all anon.

SIGIFRED. Some tavern brawl?

ALBERT. 'Twas with some people out of common reach;
Revenge is difficult.

SIGIFRED. I am your friend;
We meet again to-day, and can confer
Upon it. For the present I'm in haste.

ALBERT. Whither?

SIGIFRED. To fetch King Gersa to the feast.
The Emperor on this marriage is so hot,
Pray heaven it end not in apoplexy!
The very porters, as I pass'd the doors,
Heard his loud laugh, and answer'd in full choir.
I marvel, Albert, you delay so long
From these bright revelries; go, show yourself,
You may be made a duke.

ALBERT. Ay, very like.
Pray, what day has his Highness fix'd upon?

SIGIFRED. For what?

ALBERT. The marriage. What else can I mean?

SIGIFRED. To-day. O, I forgot, you could not know;

The news is scarce a minute old with me.

ALBERT. Married to-day! To-day! You did not say so?

SIGIFRED. Now, while I speak to you, their comely heads
Are bowed before the mitre.

ALBERT. O! monstrous!

SIGIFRED. What is this?

ALBERT. Nothing, Sigifred. Farewell!
We'll meet upon our subject. Farewell, Count!

[Exit.

SIGIFRED. Is this clear-headed Albert? He brain-turn'd!
'Tis as portentous as a meteor.

[Exit.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

*Enter, as from the Marriage, OTHO, LUDOLPH, AURANTHE,
CONRAD, Nobles, Knights, Ladies, &c. Music.*

OTHO. Now, Ludolph! Now, Auranthe! Daughter fair!
What can I find to grace your nuptial day
More than my love, and these wide realms in fee?

LUDOLPH. I have too much.

AURANTHE. And I, my liege, by far.

LUDOLPH. Auranthe I have! O, my bride, my love!
Not all the gaze upon us can restrain
My eyes, too long poor exiles from thy face,
From adoration, and my foolish tongue
From uttering soft responses to the love
I see in thy mute beauty beaming forth!
Fair creature, bless me with a single word!
All mine!

AURANTHE. Spare, spare me, my lord; I swoon else.

LUDOLPH. Soft beauty! by to-morrow I should die,
Wert thou not mine. [They talk apart.

1ST LADY. How deep she has bewitch'd him!

1ST KNIGHT. Ask you for her recipe for love philtres.

2ND LADY. They hold the Emperor in admiration.

OTHO. If ever king was happy that am I!
What are the cites 'yond the Alps to me,
The provinces about the Danube's mouth,
The promise of fair sail beyond the Rhone;
Or routing out of Hyperborean hordes,
To these fair children, stars of a new age?

Unless perchance I might rejoice to win
This little ball of earth, and chuck it them
To play with!

AURANTHE. Nay, my lord, I do not know——

LUDOLPH. Let me not famish.

OTHO (*to Conrad*). Good Franconia,
You heard what oath I swear, as the sun rose,
That unless Heaven would send me back my son,
My Arab,—no soft music should enrich
The cool wine, kiss'd off with a soldier's smack;
Now all my empire, bartered for one feast,
Seems poverty.

CONRAD. Upon the neighbour plain
The heralds have prepared a royal lists;
Your knights, found war-proof in the bloody field,
Speed to the game.

OTHO. Well, Ludolph, what say you?

LUDOLPH. My lord!

OTHO. A tourney?

CONRAD. Or, if't please you best——

LUDOLPH. I want no more!

1ST LADY. He soars!

2ND LADY. Past all reason.

LUDOLPH. Though heaven's choir
Should in a vast circumference descend
And sing for my delight, I'd stop my ears!
Though bright Apollo's car stood burning here,
And he put out an arm to bid me mount,
His touch an immortality, not I!
This earth, this palace, this room, Auranthe!

OTHO. This is a little painful; just too much.
Conrad, if he flames longer in this wise
I shall believe in wizard-woven loves
And old romances; but I'll break the spell.
Ludolph!

CONRAD. He'll be calm, anon.

LUDOLPH. You call'd?

Yes, yes, yes, I offend. You must forgive me;
Not being quite recover'd from the stun
Of your large bounties. A tourney, is it not?

[*A sennet heard faintly.*]

CONRAD. The trumpets reach us.

ETHELBERT (*without*). On your peril, sirs,
 Detain us!
 1ST VOICE (*without*). Let not the abbot pass.
 2ND VOICE (*without*). No.
 On your lives!
 1ST VOICE (*without*). Holy father, you must not.
 ETHELBERT (*without*). Otho!
 OTHO. Who calls on Otho?
 ETHELBERT (*without*). Ethelbert!
 OTHO. Let him come in.

Enter ETHELBERT, leading in ERMINIA.

Thou cursed abbot, why
 Hast brought pollution to our holy rites?
 Hast thou no fear of hangman, or the faggot?
 LUDOLPH. What portent—what strange prodigy is this?
 CONRAD. Away!
 ETHELBERT. You, Duke?
 ERMINIA. Albert has surely fail'd me!
 Look at the Emperor's brow upon me bent!
 ETHELBERT. A sad delay!
 CONRAD. Away, you guilty thing!
 ETHELBERT. You again, Duke? Justice, most noble Otho!
 You—go to your sister there, and plot again,
 A quick plot, swift as thought to save your heads;
 For lo! the toils are spread around your den,
 The world is all agape to see dragg'd forth
 Two ugly monsters.
 LUDOLPH. What means he, my lord?
 CONRAD. I cannot guess.
 ETHELBERT. Best ask your lady sister,
 Whether the riddle puzzles her beyond
 The power of utterance.
 CONRAD. Foul barbarian, cease;
 The Princess faints!
 LUDOLPH. Stab him! O, sweetest wife!
 [*Attendants bear off AURANTHE.*]
 ERMINIA. Alas!
 ETHELBERT. Your wife?
 LUDOLPH. Ay, Satan! does that yerk ye?
 ETHELBERT. Wife! so soon!

LUDOLPH. Ay, wife! Oh, impudence!
Thou bitter mischief! Venomous mad priest!
How dar'st thou lift those beetle brows at me—
Me—the prince Ludolph, in this presence here,
Upon my marriage-day, and scandalize
My joys with such opprobrious surprise?
Wife! Why dost linger on that syllable,
As if it were some demon's name pronounc'd
To summon harmful lightning, and make yawn
The sleepy thunder? Hast no sense of fear?
No ounce of man in thy mortality?
Tremble! for, at my nod, the sharpen'd axe
Will make thy bold tongue quiver to the roots,
Those grey lids wink, and thou not know it more!

ETHELBERT. O, poor deceived Prince! I pity thee!
Great Otho! I claim justice——

LUDOLPH. Thou shalt have't!
Thine arms from forth a pulpit of hot fire
Shall sprawl distracted? O that that dull cowl
Were some most sensitive portion of thy life,
That I might give it to my hounds to tear!
Thy girdle some fine zealous-pained nerve
To girth my saddle! And those devil's beads
Each one a life, that I might every day
Crush one with Vulcan's hammer!

OTHO. Peace, my son;
You far outstrip my spleen in this affair.
Let us be calm, and hear the abbot's plea
For this intrusion.

LUDOLPH. I am silent, sire.

OTHO. Conrad, see all depart not wanted here.

[Exeunt Knights, Ladies, &c.]

Ludolph, be calm. Ethelbert, peace awhile.
This mystery demands an audience
Of a just judge, and that will Otho be.

LUDOLPH. Why has he time to breathe another word?

OTHO. Ludolph, old Ethelbert, be sure, comes not
To beard us for no cause; he's not the man
To cry himself up an ambassador
Without credentials.

LUDOLPH. I'll chain up myself.

OTHO. Old abbot, stand here forth. Lady Erminia,
Sit. And now, abbot! what have you to say?
Our ear is open. First we here denounce
Hard penalties against thee, if 't be found
The cause for which you have disturb'd us here,
Making our bright hours muddy, be a thing
Of little moment.

ETHELBERT. See this innocent!
Otho! thou father of the people call'd,
Is her life nothing? Her fair honour nothing?
Her tears from matins until even-song
Nothing? Her burst heart nothing? Emperor!
Is this your gentle niece—the simplest flower
Of the world's herbal—this fair lily blanch'd
Still with the dews of piety, this meek lady
Here sitting like an angel newly-shent,
Who veils its snowy wings and grows all pale,—
Is she nothing?

OTHO. What more to the purpose, abbot?

LUDOLPH. Whither is he winding?

CONRAD. No clue yet!

ETHELBERT. You have heard, my liege, and so, no doubt, all
here,

Foul, poisonous, malignant whisperings;
Nay open speech, rude mockery grown common,
Against the spotless nature and clear fame
Of the princess Erminia, your niece.
I have intruded here thus suddenly,
Because I hold those base weeds, with tight hand,
Which now disfigure her fair growing stem,
Waiting but for your sign to pull them up
By the dark roots, and leave her palpable,
To all men's sight, a lady innocent.
The ignominy of that whisper'd tale
About a midnight gallant seen to climb
A window to her chamber neighbour'd near,
I will from her turn off, and put the load
On the right shoulders; on that wretch's head,
Who, by close stratagems, did save herself,
Chiefly by shifting to this lady's room
A rope-ladder for false witness.

LUDOLPH.

Most atrocious!

OTHO. Ethelbert, proceed.

ETHELBERT. With sad lips I shall:
For, in the healing of one wound, I fear
To make a greater. His young highness here
To-day was married.

LUDOLPH. Good.

ETHELBERT. Would it were good!
Yet why do I delay to spread abroad
The names of those two vipers, from whose jaw
A deadly breath went forth to taint and blast
This guileless lady?

OTHO. Abbot, speak their names.

ETHELBERT. A minute first. It cannot be—but may
I ask, great judge, if you to-day have put
A letter by unread?

OTHO. Does't end in this?

CONRAD. Out with their names!

ETHELBERT. Bold sinner, say you so?

LUDOLPH. Out, hideous monk!

OTHO. Confess, or by the wheel—

ETHELBERT. My evidence cannot be far away;
And, though it never come, be on my head
The crime of passing an attaint upon
The slanderers of this virgin——

LUDOLPH. Speak aloud!

ETHELBERT. Auranthe, and her brother there!

CONRAD. Amaze!

LUDOLPH. Throw them from the windows!

OTHO. Do what you will!

LUDOLPH. What shall I do with them?
Something of quick dispatch, for should she hear,
My soft Auranthe, her sweet mercy would
Prevail against my fury. Damned priest!
What swift death wilt thou die? As to the lady
I touch her not.

ETHELBERT. Illustrious Otho, stay!
An ample store of misery thou hast;
Choke not the granary of thy noble mind
With more bad bitter grain, too difficult
A cud for the repentance of a man
Grey-growing. To thee only I appeal,
Not to thy noble son, whose yeasting youth

Will clear itself, and crystal turn again.
A young man's heart, by Heaven's blessing, is
A wide world, where a thousand new-born hopes
Empurple fresh the melancholy blood;
But an old man's is narrow, tenantless
Of hopes, and stuff'd with many memories,
Which, being pleasant, ease the heavy pulse—
Painful, clog up and stagnate. Weigh this matter
Even as a miser balances his coin;
And, in the name of mercy, give command
That your knight Albert be brought here before you.
He will expound this riddle; he will show
A noon-day proof of bad Auranthe's guilt.
OTHO. Let Albert straight be summon'd.

[Exit one of the Nobles.]

LUDOLPH. Impossible!
I cannot doubt—I will not—no—to doubt
Is to be ashes!—wither'd up to death!
OTHO. My gentle Ludolph, harbour not a fear;
You do yourself much wrong.
LUDOLPH. O, wretched dolt!
Now, when my foot is almost on thy neck,
Wilt thou infuriate me? Proof! Thou fool!
Why wilt thou tease impossibility
With such a thick-skull'd persevering suit?
Fanatic obstinacy! Prodigy!
Monster of folly! Ghost of a turn'd brain!
You puzzle me,—you haunt me, when I dream
Of you my brain will split! Bold sorcerer!
Juggler! May I come near you? On my soul
I know not whether to pity, curse, or laugh.

Enter ALBERT and the Nobleman.

Here, Albert, this old phantom wants a proof!
Give him his proof! A camel's load of proofs!
OTHO. Albert, I speak to you as to a man
Whose words once utter'd pass like current gold;
And therefore fit to calmly put a close
To this brief tempest. Do you stand possess'd
Of any proof against the honourableness
Of Lady Auranthe, our new-spoused daughter?

ALBERT. You chill me with astonishment. How's this?
My liege, what proof should I have 'gainst a fame
Impossible of slur? [OTH0 rises.

ERMINIA. O wickedness!

ETHELBERT. Deluded monarch, 'tis a cruel lie.

OTH0. Peace, rebel-priest!

CONRAD. Insult beyond credence!

ERMINIA. Almost a dream!

LUDOLPH. We have awaked from

A foolish dream that from my brow hath wrung

A wrathful dew. O, folly! why did I

So act the lion with this silly gnat?

Let them depart. Lady Erminia!

I ever grieved for you, as who did not?

But now you have, with such a brazen front,

So most maliciously, so madly, striven

To dazzle the soft moon, when tenderest clouds

Should be unloop'd around to curtain her,

I leave you to the desert of the world

Almost with pleasure. Let them be set free

For me! I take no personal revenge

More than against a nightmare, which a man

Forgets in the new dawn. [Exit LUDOLPH.

OTH0. Still in extremes! No, they must not be loose.

ETHELBERT. Albert, I must suspect thee of a crime
So fiendish——

OTH0. Fear'st thou not my fury, monk?

Conrad, be they in your safe custody

Till we determine some fit punishment.

It is so mad a deed, I must reflect

And question them in private; for perhaps,

By patient scrutiny, we may discover

Whether they merit death, or should be placed

In care of the physicians.

[Exeunt OTH0 and Nobles, ALBERT following.

CONRAD. My guards, ho!

ERMINIA. Albert, wilt thou follow there?

Wilt thou creep dastardly behind his back,

And shrink away from a weak woman's eye?

Turn, thou court-Janus! thou forget'st thyself;

Here is the duke, waiting with open arms

[Enter Guards.

To thank thee; here congratulate each other;
Wring hands; embrace; and swear how lucky 'twas
That I, by happy chance, hit the right man
Of all the world to trust in.

ALBERT. Trust! to me!

CONRAD (*aside*). He is the sole one in this mystery.

ERMINIA. Well, I give up, and save my prayers for Heaven!
You, who could do this deed, would ne'er relent,
Though, at my words, the hollow prison-vaults
Would groan for pity.

CONRAD. Manacle them both!

ETHELBERT. I know it—it must be—I see it all!
Albert, thou art the minion!

ERMINIA. Ah! too plain——

CONRAD. Silence! Gag up their mouths! I cannot bear
More of this brawling. That the Emperor
Had placed you in some other custody!
Bring them away. [Exeunt all but ALBERT.

ALBERT. Though my name perish from the book of honour,
Almost before the recent ink is dry,
And be no more remember'd after death
Than any drummer's in the muster-roll;
Yet shall I season high my sudden fall
With triumph o'er that evil-witted duke!
He shall feel what it is to have the hand
Of a man drowning, on his hateful throat.

Enter GERSA and SIGIFRED.

GERSA. What discord is at ferment in this house?

SIGIFRED. We are without conjecture; not a soul
We met could answer any certainty.

GERSA. Young Ludolph, like a fiery arrow, shot
By us.

SIGIFRED. The Emperor, with cross'd arms, in thought.

GERSA. In one room music, in another sadness,
Perplexity everywhere!

ALBERT. A trifle more!

Follow; your presences will much avail
To tune our jarred spirits. I'll explain.

[Exeunt.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—AURANTHE'S *Apartment*.

AURANTHE and CONRAD *discovered*.

CONRAD. Well, well, I know what ugly jeopardy
We are caged in; you need not pester that
Into my ears. Prythee, let me be spared
A foolish tongue, that I may bethink me
Of remedies with some deliberation.
You cannot doubt but 'tis in Albert's power
To crush or save us?

AURANTHE. No, I cannot doubt.
He has, assure yourself, by some strange means,
My secret; which I ever hid from him,
Knowing his mawkish honesty.

CONRAD. Cursed slave!

AURANTHE. Ay, I could almost curse him now myself.
Wretched impediment! Evil genius!
A glue upon my wings, that cannot spread,
When they should span the provinces! A snake,
A scorpion, sprawling on the first gold step,
Conducting to the throne high canopied.

CONRAD. You would not hear my counsel, when his life
Might have been trodden out, all sure and hush'd;
Now the dull animal forsooth must be
Entreated, managed! When can you contrive
The interview he demands?

AURANTHE. As speedily
It must be done as my bribed woman can
Unseen conduct him to me; but I fear
'Twill be impossible, while the broad day
Comes through the panes with persecuting glare.
Methinks, if 't now were night I could intrigue
With darkness, bring the stars to second me,
And settle all this trouble.

CONRAD. Nonsense! Child!
See him immediately; why not now?

AURANTHE. Do you forget that even the senseless doorposts
Are on the watch and gaze through all the house?
How many whisperers there are about,
Hungry for evidence to ruin me.—
Men I have spurn'd, and women I have taunted?

Besides, the foolish prince sends, minute whiles,
His pages—so they tell me—to inquire
After my health, entreating, if I please,
To see me.

CONRAD. Well, suppose this Albert here;
What is your power with him?

AURANTHE. He should be
My echo, my taught parrot! but I fear
He will be cur enough to bark at me;
Have his own say; read me some silly creed
'Bout shame and pity.

CONRAD. What will you do then?

AURANTHE. What I shall do, I know not: what I would
Cannot be done; for see, this chamber-floor
Will not yield to the pick-axe and the spade,—
Here is no quiet depth of hollow ground.

CONRAD. Sister, you have grown sensible and wise,
Seconding, ere I speak it, what is now,
I hope, resolved between us.

AURANTHE. Say, what is 't?

CONRAD. You need not be his sexton too: a man
May carry that with him shall make him die
Elsewhere,—give that to him; pretend the while
You will to-morrow succumb to his wishes,
Be what they may, and send him from the Castle
On some fool's errand; let his latest groan
Frighten the wolves!

AURANTHE. Alas! he must not die!

CONRAD. Would you were both hearsed up in stifling lead!
Detested—

AURANTHE. Conrad, hold! I would not bear
The little thunder of your fretful tongue,
Tho' I alone were taken in these toils,
And you could free me; but remember, sir,
You live alone in my security:
So keep your wits at work, for your own sake,
Not mine, and be more mannerly.

CONRAD. Thou wasp!
If my domains were emptied of these folk,
And I had thee to starve—

AURANTHE. O, marvellous!
But Conrad, now be gone; the host is look'd for;
Cringe to the Emperor, entertain the lords,
And, do ye mind, above all things, proclaim
My sickness, with a brother's sadden'd eye,
Condoling with Prince Ludolph. In fit time
Return to me.

CONRAD. I leave you to your thoughts. [Exit.

AURANTHE (*sola*). Down, down, proud temper! down, Auran-
the's pride!

Why do I anger him when I should kneel?
Conrad! Albert! help! help! What can I do?
O, wretched woman! lost, wreck'd, swallow'd up,
Accurs'd, blasted! O, thou golden Crown,
Orbing along the serene firmament
Of a wide empire, like a glowing moon;
And thou, bright sceptre! lustrous in my eyes
There—as the fabled fair Hesperian tree,
Bearing a fruit more precious! graceful thing,
Delicate, godlike, magic! must I leave
Thee to melt in the visionary air,
Ere, by one grasp, this common hand is made
Imperial? I do not know the time
When I have wept for sorrow; but methinks
I could now sit upon the ground, and shed
Tears, tears of misery. O, the heavy day!
How shall I bear my life till Albert comes?
Ludolph! Erminia! Proofs! O heavy day!
Bring me some mourning weeds, that I may 'tire
Myself as fits one wailing her own death:
Cut off these curls, and brand this lily hand,
And throw these jewels from my loathing sight,—
Fetch me a missal, and a string of beads,—
A cup of bitter'd water, and a crust,—
I will confess, O holy Abbot!—How!
What is this? Auranthe! thou fool, dolt,
Whimpering idiot! up! up! and quell!
I am safe! Coward! why am I in fear?
Albert! he cannot stickle, chew the cud
In such a fine extreme,—impossible!
Who knocks?

[Goes to the Door, listens, and opens it.

Enter ALBERT.

Albert, I have been waiting for you here
With such an aching heart, such swooning throbs
On my poor brain, such cruel—cruel sorrow,
That I should claim your pity! Art not well?

ALBERT. Yes, lady, well.

AURANTHE. You look not so, alas!
But pale, as if you brought some heavy news.

ALBERT. You know full well what makes me look so pale

AURANTHE. No! Do I? Surely I am still to learn
Some horror; all I know, this present, is
I am near hustled to a dangerous gulf,
Which you can save me from,—and therefore safe,
So trusting in thy love; that should not make
Thee pale, my Albert.

ALBERT. It doth make me freeze.

AURANTHE. Why should it, love?

ALBERT. You should not ask me that,
But make your own heart monitor, and save
Me the great pain of telling. You must know.

AURANTHE. Something has vexed you, Albert. There are times
When simplest things put on a sombre cast;
A melancholy mood will haunt a man,
Until most easy matters take the shape
Of unachievable tasks; small rivulets
Then seem impassable.

ALBERT. Do not cheat yourself
With hope that gloss of words, or suppliant action,
Or tears, or ravings, or self-threaten'd death,
Can alter my resolve.

AURANTHE. You make me tremble,
Not so much at your threats, as at your voice,
Untuned, and harsh, and barren of all love.

ALBERT. You suffocate me! Stop this devil's parley,
And listen to me; know me once for all.

AURANTHE. I thought I did. Alas! I am deceived.

ALBERT. No, you are not deceived. You took me for
A man detesting all inhuman crime;
And therefore kept from me your demon's plot
Against Erminia. Silent? Be so still;
For ever! Speak no more; but hear my words,
Thy fate. Your safety I have bought to-day

By blazoning a lie, which in the dawn
I'll expiate with truth.

AURANTHE. O cruel traitor!

ALBERT. For I would not set eyes upon thy shame;
I would not see thee dragg'd to death by the hair,
Penanced, and taunted on a scaffolding!
To-night, upon the skirts of the blind wood
That blackens northward of these horrid towers,
I wait for you with horses. Choose your fate.
Farewell!

AURANTHE. Albert, you jest; I'm sure you must.
You, an ambitious Soldier! I, a Queen,
One who could say,—Here, rule these Provinces!
Take tribute from these cities for thyself!
Empty these armouries, these treasuries,
Muster thy warlike thousands at a nod!
Go! conquer Italy!

ALBERT. Auranthe, you have made
The whole world chaff to me. Your doom is fix'd.

AURANTHE. Out, villain! dastard!

ALBERT. Look there to the door!
Who is it?

AURANTHE. Conrad, traitor!

ALBERT. Let him in.

Enter CONRAD.

Do not affect amazement, hypocrite,
At seeing me in this chamber.

CONRAD. Auranthe?

ALBERT. Talk not with eyes, but speak your curses out
Against me, who would sooner crush and grind
A brace of toads, than league with them t' oppress
An innocent lady, gull an Emperor,
More generous to me than autumn sun
To ripening harvests.

AURANTHE. No more insult, sir!

ALBERT. Ay, clutch your scabbard; but, for prudence sake,
Draw not the sword; 'twould make an uproar, Duke,
You would not hear the end of. At nightfall
Your lady sister, if I guess aright,
Will leave this busy castle. You had best
Take farewell too of worldly vanities.

CONRAD. Vassal!

ALBERT. To-morrow, when the Emperor sends
For loving Conrad, see you fawn on him.
Good even!

AURANTHE. You'll be seen!

ALBERT. See the coast clear then.

AURANTHE (*as he goes*). Remorseless Albert! Cruel, cruel wretch!
[*She lets him out.*]

CONRAD. So, we must lick the dust?

AURANTHE. I follow him.

CONRAD. How? Where? The plan of your escape?

AURANTHE. He waits

For me with horses by the forest-side,
Northward.

CONRAD. Good, good! he dies. You go, say you?

AURANTHE. Perforce.

CONRAD. Be speedy, darkness! Till that comes,
Fiends keep you company! [Exit.

AURANTHE. And you! and you!
And all men! Vanish!

[Retires to an inner Apartment.]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Enter LUDOLPH and PAGE.

PAGE. Still very sick, my lord; but now I went,
And there her women, in a mournful throng,
Stood in the passage whispering; if any
Moved 'twas with careful steps, and hushed as death.
They bade me stop.

LUDOLPH. Good fellow, once again
Make soft inquiry; prythee, be not stay'd
By any hindrance, but with gentlest force
Break through her weeping servants, till thou com'st
E'en to her chamber-door, and there, fair boy,—
If with thy mother's milk thou hast suck'd in
Any divine eloquence,—woo her ears
With plaints for me, more tender than the voice
Of dying Echo, echoed.

PAGE. Kindest master!
To know thee sad thus, will unloose my tongue

In mournful syllables. Let but my words reach
Her ears, and she shall take them coupled with
Moans from my heart, and sighs not counterfeit.
May I speed better!

[Exit PAGE.

LUDOLPH (*solus*). Auranthe! My life!
Long have I loved thee, yet till now not loved:
Remembering, as I do, hard-hearted times
When I had heard e'en of thy death perhaps,
And—thoughtless!—suffered thee to pass alone
Into Elysium!—now I follow thee,
A substance or a shadow, wheresoe'er
Thou leadest me—whether thy white feet press
With pleasant weight, the amorous-aching earth,
Or thro' the air thou pioneerest me,
A shade! Yet sadly I predestinate!
O, unbenignest Love, why wilt thou let
Darkness steal out upon the sleepy world
So wearily, as if Night's chariot-wheels
Were clogg'd in some thick cloud? O, changeful Love,
Let not her steeds with drowsy-footed pace
Pass the high stars, before sweet embassy
Comes from the pillow'd beauty of that fair
Completion of all-delicate Nature's wit!
Pout her faint lips anew with rubious health;
And, with thine infant fingers, lift the fringe
Of her sick eye-lids; that those eyes may glow
With wooing light upon me, ere the morn
Peers with disrelish, grey, barren, and cold!

Enter GERSA and Courtiers.

Otho calls me his Lion,—should I blush
To be so tamed? so——

GERSA.

Do me the courtesy,

Gentlemen, to pass on.

1ST KNIGHT.

We are your servants.

[*Exeunt Courtiers.*

LUDOLPH. It seems then, sir, you have found out the man
You would confer with;—me?

GERSA.

If I break not

Too much upon your thoughtful mood, I will
Claim a brief while your patience.

LUDOLPH. For what cause
Soe'er, I shall be honour'd.

GERSA. I not less.

LUDOLPH. What may it be? No trifle can take place
Of such deliberate prologue, serious 'haviour.
But, be it what it may, I cannot fail
To listen with no common interest;
For though so new your presence is to me,
I have a soldier's friendship for your fame.
Please you explain.

GERSA. As thus:—for, pardon me,
I cannot, in plain terms, grossly assault
A noble nature; and would faintly sketch
What your quick apprehension will fill up;
So finely I esteem you.

LUDOLPH. I attend.

GERSA. Your generous father, most illustrious Otho,
Sits in the banquet-room among his chiefs;
His wine is bitter, for you are not there;
His eyes are fix'd still on the open doors,
And ev'ry passer in he frowns upon,
Seeing no Ludolph comes.

LUDOLPH. I do neglect.

GERSA. And for your absence may I guess the cause?

LUDOLPH. Stay there! No—guess? More princely you must be
Than to make guesses at me. 'Tis enough.
I'm sorry I can hear no more.

GERSA. And I

As grieved to force it on you so abrupt;
Yet, one day, you must know a grief, whose sting
Will sharpen more the longer 'tis conceal'd.

LUDOLPH. Say it at once, sir! Dead—dead?—is she dead?

GERSA. Mine is a cruel task: she is not dead,
And would, for your sake, she were innocent.

LUDOLPH. Hungarian! thou amazest me beyond
All scope of thought, convulseth my heart's blood
To deady churning! Gersa, you are young,
As I am; let me observe you, face to face:
Not grey-brow'd like the poisonous Ethelbert,
No rheumed eyes, no furrowing of age,
No wrinkles, where all vices nestle in
Like crannied vermin,—no! but fresh, and young,

And hopeful featured. Ha! by heaven you weep!
Tears, human tears! Do you repent you then
Of a cursed torturer's office? Why shouldst join—
Tell me,—the league of devils? Confess—confess—
The lie!

GERSA. Lie!—but begone all ceremonious points
Of honour battailous! I could not turn
My wrath against thee for the orb'd world.

LUDOLPH. Your wrath, weak boy? Tremble at mine, unless
Retraction follow close upon the heels
Of that late 'stounding insult! Why has my sword
Not done already a sheer judgment on thee?
Despair, or eat thy words! Why, thou wast nigh
Whimpering away my reason! Hark ye, sir,
It is no secret, that Erminia,
Erminia, sir, was hidden in your tent,—
O bless'd asylum! Comfortable home!
Begone! I pity thee; thou art a gull,
Erminia's last new puppet!

GERSA. Furious fire!
Thou mak'st me boil as hot as thou canst flame!
And in thy teeth I give thee back the lie!
Thou liest! Thou, Auranthe's fool! A wittol!

LUDOLPH. Look! look at this bright sword;
There is no part of it, to the very hilt,
But shall indulge itself about thine heart!
Draw, but remember thou must cower thy plumes,
As yesterday the Arab made thee stoop.

GERSA. Patience! Not here; I would not spill thy blood
Here, underneath this roof where Otho breathes,—
Thy father,—almost mine.

LUDOLPH. O faltering coward!

Enter PAGE.

Stay, stay; here is one I have half a word with.
Well? What ails thee, child?

PAGE. My lord!
LUDOLPH. What wouldst say?

PAGE. They are fled!

LUDOLPH. They! Who?

PAGE. When anxiously
I hasten'd back, your grieving messenger,

I found the stairs all dark, the lamps extinct,
And not a foot or whisper to be heard.
I thought her dead, and on the lowest step
Sat listening; when presently came by
Two muffled up,—one sighing heavily,
The other cursing low, whose voice I knew
For the Duke Conrad's. Close I followed them
Thro' the dark ways they chose to the open air,
And, as I follow'd, heard my lady speak.

LUDOLPH. Thy life answers the truth!

PAGE. The chamber's empty!

LUDOLPH. As I will be of mercy! So, at last,
This nail is in my temples!

GERSA. Be calm in this.

LUDOLPH. I am.

GERSA. And Albert too has disappear'd;
Ere I met you, I sought him everywhere;
You would not hearken.

LUDOLPH. Which way went they, boy?

GERSA. I'll hunt with you.

LUDOLPH. No, no, no. My senses are
Still whole. I have survived. My arm is strong—
My appetite sharp—for revenge! I'll no sharer
In my feast; my injury is all my own,
And so is my revenge, my lawful chattels!
Terrier, ferret them out! Burn—burn the witch!
Trace me their footsteps! Away!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

SCENE I.—*A part of the Forest.*

Enter CONRAD and AURANTHE.

AURANTHE. Go no further; not a step more. Thou art
A master-plague in the midst of miseries.
Go,—I fear thee! I tremble, every limb,
Who never shook before. There's moody death
In thy resolved looks! Yes, I could kneel
To pray thee far away! Conrad, go! go!—
There! yonder, underneath the boughs I see
Our horses!

CONRAD. Ay, and the man.

AURANTHE. Yes, he is there!

Go, go,—no blood! no blood!—go, gentle Conrad!

CONRAD. Farewell!

AURANTHE. Farewell! For this Heaven pardon you!

[Exit AURANTHE.]

CONRAD. If he survive one hour, then may I die
In unimagined tortures, or breathe through
A long life in the foulest sink o' the world!
He dies! 'Tis well she do not advertise
The caitiff of the cold steel at his back.

[Exit CONRAD.]

Enter LUDOLPH and PAGE.

LUDOLPH. Miss'd the way, boy? Say not that on your peril!

PAGE. Indeed, indeed, I cannot trace them further.

LUDOLPH. Must I stop here? Here solitary die
Stifled beneath the quick oppressive shade
Of these dull boughs—this even of dark thickets—
Silent,—without revenge?—pshaw! bitter end,—
A bitter death—a suffocating death,—
A gnawing—silent—deadly, quiet death!
Escaped?—fled?—vanish'd? melted into air?
She's gone. I cannot clutch her! no revenge!
A muffled death, ensnared in horrid silence!
Suck'd to my grave amid a dreamy calm!
O, where is that illustrious noise of war,
To smother up this sound of labouring breath,
This rustle of the trees!

[AURANTHE shrieks at a distance.]

PAGE. My lord, a noise!

This way—hark!

LUDOLPH. Yes, yes! A hope! A music!
A glorious clamour! How I live again!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Forest.*

Enter ALBERT (wounded).

ALBERT. Oh! for enough life to support me on
To Otho's feet!

Enter LUDOLPH

LUDOLPH. Thrice villainous, stay there!
Tell me where that detested woman is,
Or this is through thee!

ALBERT. My good Prince, with me
The sword has done its worst; not without worst
Done to another,—Conrad has it home!
I see you know it all!

LUDOLPH. Where is his sister?

AURANTHE rushes in.

AURANTHE. Albert!

LUDOLPH. Ha! There! there! He is the paramour!—
There—hug him—dying!—O, thou innocence,
Shrine him and comfort him at his last gasp;
Kiss down his eyelids! Was he not thy love?
Wilt thou forsake him at his latest hour?
Keep fearful and aloof from his last gaze,
His most uneasy moments, when cold death
Stands with the door ajar to let him in?

ALBERT. O that that door with hollow slam would close
Upon me sudden! for I cannot meet,
In all the unknown chambers of the dead,
Such horrors!

LUDOLPH. Auranthe! what can he mean?
What horrors? Is it not a joyous time?

Am I not married to a paragon
“Of personal beauty and untainted soul”?
A blushing fair-eyed purity? A sylph,
Whose snowy timid hand has never sinn’d
Beyond a flower pluck’d, white as itself?
Albert, you do insult my bride—your mistress—
To talk of horrors on our wedding-night!

ALBERT. Alas! poor Prince, I would you knew my heart!
’Tis not so guilty——

LUDOLPH. Hear! he pleads not guilty!
You are not? or, if so, what matters it?
You have escaped me, free as the dusk air,
Hid in the forest, safe from my revenge;
I cannot catch you! You should laugh at me,
Poor cheated Ludolph! Make the forest hiss
With jeers at me! You tremble—faint at once,

You will come to again. O cockatrice,
I have you! Whither wander those fair eyes
To entice the devil to your help, that he
May change you to a spider, so to crawl
Into some cranny to escape my wrath?

ALBERT. Sometimes the counsel of a dying man
Doth operate quietly when his breath is gone:
Disjoin those hands—part—part—do not destroy
Each other—forget her!—Our miseries
Are equal shared, and mercy is——

LUDOLPH. A boon
When one can compass it. Auranthe, try
Your oratory; your breath is not so hitch'd.
Ay, stare for help!

[ALBERT dies.]

There goes a spotted soul
Howling in vain along the hollow night!
Hear him! He calls you—sweet Auranthe, come!

AURANTHE. Kill me!

LUDOLPH. No! What? Upon our marriage-night?
The earth would shudder at so foul a deed!
A fair bride! A sweet bride! An innocent bride!
No! we must revel it, as 'tis in use
In times of delicate brilliant ceremony:
Come, let me lead you to our halls again!
Nay, linger not; make no resistance, sweet;—
Will you? Ah, wretch, thou canst not, for I have
The strength of twenty lions 'gainst a lamb!
Now—one adieu for Albert!—Come away!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*An inner Court of the Castle.*

Enter SIGIFRED, GONFRED, and THEODORE, meeting.

1ST KNIGHT. Was ever such a night?

SIGIFRED.

What horrors more?

Things unbelieved one hour, so strange they are,
The next hour stamps with credit.

1ST KNIGHT.

Your last news?

GONFRED. After the page's story of the death
Of Albert and Duke Conrad?

SIGIFRED.

And the return

Of Ludolph with the Princess.

GONFRED. No more, save
Prince Gersa's freeing Abbot Ethelbert,
And the sweet lady, fair Erminia,
From prison.

1ST KNIGHT. Where are they now? Hast yet heard?

GONFRED. With the sad Emperor they are closeted;
I saw the three pass slowly up the stairs,
The lady weeping, the old abbot cowl'd.

SIGIFRED. What next?

1ST KNIGHT. I ache to think on 't.

GONFRED. 'Tis with fate.

1ST KNIGHT. One while these proud towers are hush'd as death.

GONFRED. The next our poor Prince fills the arched rooms
With ghastly ravings.

SIGIFRED. I do fear his brain.

GONFRED. I will see more. Bear you so stout a heart?

[*Exeunt into the Castle.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Cabinet, opening towards a Terrace.*

OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, and a PHYSICIAN, discovered.

OTHO. O, my poor boy! My son! My son! My Ludolph!
Have ye no comfort for me, ye physicians
Of the weak body and soul?

ETHELBERT. 'Tis not in medicine,
Either of heaven or earth, to cure, unless
Fit time be chosen to administer.

OTHO. A kind forbearance, holy abbot. Come,
Erminia; here, sit by me, gentle girl;
Give me thy hand; hast thou forgiven me?

ERMINIA. Would I were with the saints to pray for you!

OTHO. Why will ye keep me from my darling child?

PHYSICIAN. Forgive me, but he must not see thy face.

OTHO. Is then a father's countenance a Gorgon?
Hath it not comfort in it? Would it not
Console my poor boy, cheer him, heal his spirits?
Let me embrace him; let me speak to him;
I will! Who hinders me? Who's Emperor?

PHYSICIAN. You may not, Sire; 'twould overwhelm him
quite,
He is so full of grief and passionate wrath;

Too heavy a sigh would kill him, or do worse.
He must be saved by fine contrivances;
And, most especially, we must keep clear
Out of his sight a father whom he loves;
His heart is full, it can contain no more
And do its ruddy office.

ETHELBERT. Sage advice;
We must endeavour how to ease and slacken
The tight-wound energies of his despair,
Not make them tenser.

OTHO. Enough! I hear, I hear.
Yet you were about to advise more,—I listen.

ETHELBERT. This learned doctor will agree with me,
That not in the smallest point should he be thwarted,
Or gainsaid by one word; his very motions,
Nods, becks, and hints, should be obeyed with care,
Even on the moment; so his troubled mind
May cure itself.

PHYSICIAN. There are no other means.

OTHO. Open the door; let's hear if all is quiet.

PHYSICIAN. Beseech you, Sire, forbear.

ERMINIA.

Do, do.

OTHO.

I command!

Open it straight:—hush!—quiet!—my lost boy!
My miserable child!

LUDOLPH (*indistinctly without*). Fill, fill my goblet,—here's
a health!

ERMINIA. O, close the door!

OTHO. Let, let me hear his voice; this cannot last;
And fain would I catch up his dying words,
Though my own knell they be! This cannot last!
O let me catch his voice—for lo! I hear
A whisper in this silence that he's dead!
It is so! Gersa?

Enter GERSA.

PHYSICIAN. Say, how fares the Prince?

GERSA. More calm; his features are less wild and flush'd;
Once he complain'd of weariness.

PHYSICIAN.

Indeed!

'Tis good,—'tis good; let him but fall asleep,
That saves him.

OTHO. Gersa, watch him like a child;
Ward him from harm,—and bring me better news!

PHYSICIAN. Humour him to the height. I fear to go;
For should he catch a glimpse of my dull garb,
It might affright him, fill him with suspicion
That we believe him sick, which must not be.

GERSA. I will invent what soothing means I can.

[Exit GERSA.]

PHYSICIAN. This should cheer up your Highness; weariness
Is a good symptom, and most favourable;
It gives me pleasant hopes. Please you, walk forth
Upon the terrace; the refreshing air
Will blow one half of your sad doubts away. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V.—*A Banqueting Hall, brilliantly illuminated, and set forth with all costly magnificence, with Supper-tables laden with Services of Gold and Silver. A door in the back scene, guarded by two Soldiers. Lords, Ladies, Knights, Gentlemen, &c., whispering sadly, and ranging themselves; part entering and part discovered.*

1ST KNIGHT. Grievously are we tantalised, one and all;
Sway'd here and there, commanded to and fro,
As though we were the shadows of a sleep,
And linked to a dreaming fancy. What do we here?

GONFRED. I am no seer; you know we must obey
The Prince from A to Z, though it should be
To set the place in flames. I pray, hast heard
Where the most wicked Princess is?

1ST KNIGHT. There, sir,
In the next room; have you remarked those two
Stout soldiers posted at the door?

GONFRED.

For what?

[They whisper.]

1ST LADY. How ghast a train!

2ND LADY. Sure this should be some splendid burial.

1ST LADY. What fearful whispering! See, see,—Gersa
there!

Enter GERSA.

GERSA. Put on your brightest looks; smile if you can;
Behave as all were happy; keep your eyes

From the least watch upon him; if he speaks
To any one, answer, collectedly,
Without surprise, his questions, howe'er strange.
Do this to the utmost,—though, alas! with me
The remedy grows hopeless! Here he comes,—
Observe what I have said,—show no surprise.

Enter LUDOLPH, followed by SIGIFRED and PAGE.

LUDOLPH. A splendid company! rare beauties here!
I should have Orphean lips, and Plato's fancy,
Amphion's utterance, toned with his lyre,
Or the deep key of Jove's sonorous mouth,
To give fit salutation. Methought I heard,
As I came in, some whispers,—what of that?
'Tis natural men should whisper; at the kiss
Of Psyche given by Love, there was a buzz
Among the gods!—and silence is as natural.
These draperies are fine, and, being a mortal,
I should desire no better; yet, in truth,
There must be some superior costliness
Some wider-domed high magnificence!
I would have, as a mortal I may not,
Hangings of heaven's clouds, purple and gold,
Slung from the spheres; gauzes of silver mist,
Loop'd up with cords of twisted wreathed light,
And tassell'd round with weeping meteors!
These pendent lamps and chandeliers are bright
As earthly fires from dull dross can be cleansed;
Yet could my eyes drink up intenser beams
Undazzled;—this is darkness,—when I close
These lids, I see far fiercer brilliances,—
Skies full of splendid moons, and shooting stars,
And spouting exhalations, diamond fires,
And panting fountains quivering with deep glows.
Yes—this is dark—is it not dark?

SIGIFRED.

My lord,

'Tis late; the lights of festival are ever
Quench'd in the morn.

LUDOLPH.

'Tis not to-morrow then?

SIGIFRED. 'Tis early dawn.

GERSA.

Indeed full time we slept;

Say you so, Prince?

LUDOLPH. I say I quarrell'd with you;
We did not tilt each other,—that's a blessing,—
Good gods! no innocent blood upon my head!

SIGIFRED. Retire, Gersa!

LUDOLPH. There should be three more here:
For two of them, they stay away perhaps,
Being gloomy-minded, haters of fair revels,—
They know their own thoughts best.

As for the third,

Deep blue eyes, semi-shaded in white lids,
Finish'd with lashes fine for more soft shade,
Completed by her twin-arch'd ebon-brows;
White temples, of exactest elegance,
Of even mould, felicitous and smooth;
Cheeks fashion'd tenderly on either side,
So perfect, so divine, that our poor eyes
Are dazzled with the sweet proportioning,
And wonder that 'tis so,—the magic chance!
Her nostrils, small, fragrant, fairy-delicate;
Her lips—I swear no human bones e'er wore
So taking a disguise;—you shall behold her!
We'll have her presently; ay, you shall see her,
And wonder at her, friends, she is so fair;
She is the world's chief jewel, and, by heaven!
She's mine by right of marriage!—she is mine!
Patience, good people, in fit time I send
A summoner,—she will obey my call,
Being a wife most mild and dutiful.
First I would hear what music is prepared
To herald and receive her; let me hear!

SIGIFRED. Bid the musicians soothe him tenderly.

[A soft strain of Music.]

LUDOLPH. Ye have none better? No, I am content;
'Tis a rich sobbing melody, with reliefs
Full and majestic; it is well enough,
And will be sweeter, when ye see her pace
Sweeping into this presence, glisten'd o'er
With emptied caskets, and her train upheld
By ladies habited in robes of lawn,
Sprinkled with golden crescents, others bright
In silks, with spangles shower'd, and bowed to
By Duchesses and pearled Margravines!

Sad! that the fairest creature of the earth—
I pray you mind me not—'tis sad, I say,
That the extremest beauty of the world
Should so entrench herself away from me,
Behind a barrier of engender'd guilt!

2ND LADY. Ah! what a moan!

1ST KNIGHT. Most piteous indeed!

LUDOLPH. She shall be brought before this company,
And then—then—

1ST LADY. He muses.

GERSA. O, Fortune! where will this end?

SIGIFRED. I guess his purpose! Indeed he must not have
That pestilence brought in,—that cannot be,
There we must stop him.

GERSA. I am lost! Hush, hush!
He is about to rave again.

LUDOLPH. A barrier of guilt! I was the fool,
She was the cheater! Who's the cheater now,
And who the fool? The entrapp'd, the caged fool,
The bird-limed raven? She shall croak to death
Secure! Methinks I have her in my fist,
To crush her with my heel! Wait, wait! I marvel
My father keeps away. Good friend—ah! Sigifred?
Do bring him to me,—and Erminia,
I fain would see before I sleep—and Ethelbert,
That he may bless me, as I know he will,
Though I have cursed him.

SIGIFRED. Rather suffer me
To lead you to them.

LUDOLPH. No, excuse me,—no!
The day is not quite done. Go, bring them hither.

[Exit SIGIFRED.]

Certes, a father's smile should, like sunlight,
Slant on my sheaved harvest of ripe bliss.
Besides, I thirst to pledge my lovely bride
In a deep goblet: let me see—what wine?
The strong Iberian juice, or mellow Greek?
Or pale Calabrian? Or the Tuscan grape?
Or of old Ætna's pulpy wine-presses,
Black stain'd with the fat vintage, as it were
The purple slaughter-house, where Bacchus' self
Prick'd his own swollen veins! Where is my page?

PAGE. Here, here!

LUDOLPH. Be ready to obey me; anon thou shalt
Bear a soft message for me; for the hour
Draws near when I must make a winding up
Of bridal mysteries—a fine-spun vengeance!
Carve it on my tomb, that, when I rest beneath
Men shall confess, this Prince was gull'd and cheated,
But from the ashes of disgrace he rose
More than a fiery dragon, and did burn
His ignominy up in purging fires!
Did I not send, sir, but a moment past,
For my father?

GERSA. You did.

LUDOLPH. Perhaps 'twould be
Much better he came not.

GERSA. He enters now!

ENTER OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, SIGIFRED, *and* PHYSICIAN.

LUDOLPH. O! thou good man, against whose sacred head
I was a mad conspirator, chiefly too
For the sake of my fair newly wedded wife,
Now to be punish'd!—do not look so sad!
Those charitable eyes will thaw my heart,
Those tears will wash away a just resolve,
A verdict ten times sworn! Awake—awake—
Put on a judge's brow, and use a tongue
Made iron-stern by habit! Thou shalt see
A deed to be applauded, 'scribed in gold!
Join a loud voice to mine, and so denounce
What I alone will execute!

OTHO. Dear son,
What is it? By your father's love, I sue
That it be nothing merciless!

LUDOLPH. To that demon?
Not so! No! She is in temple-stall,
Being garnish'd for the sacrifice, and I,
The Priest of Justice, will immolate her
Upon the altar of wrath! She stings me through!—
Even as the worm doth feed upon the nut,
So she, a scorpion, preys upon my brain!
I feel her gnawing here! Let her but vanish,

Then, father, I will lead your legions forth,
Compact in steeled squares, and speared files,
And bid our trumpets speak a fell rebuke
To nations drownsed in peace!

OTHO. To-morrow, son,
Be your word law; forget to-day——

LUDOLPH. I will,
When I have finish'd it! Now,—now, I'm pight,
Tight-footed for the deed!

ERMINIA. Alas! Alas!

LUDOLPH. What angel's voice is that? Erminia!
Ah! gentlest creature, whose sweet innocence
Was almost murder'd; I am penitent.
Wilt thou forgive me? And thou holy man,
Good Ethelbert, shall I die in peace with you?

ERMINIA. Die, my lord?

LUDOLPH. I feel it possible.

OTHO. Physician?

PHYSICIAN. I fear, he is past my skill.

OTHO. Not so!

LUDOLPH. I see it—I see it—I have been wandering!
Half mad—not right here—I forget my purpose.

Bestir—bestir—Auranthe! Ha! ha! ha!

Youngster! Page! go bid them drag her to me!

Obe! This shall finish it! [*Draws a dagger.*]

OTHO. Oh, my son! my son!

SIGIFRED. This must not be—stop there!

LUDOLPH. Am I obey'd?

A little talk with her—no harm—haste! haste!

[*Exit PAGE.*]

Set her before me—never fear I can strike.

SEVERAL VOICES. My lord! My lord!

GERSA. Good Prince!

LUDOLPH. Why do ye trouble me? out—out—away!
There she is! take that! and that! no, no,
That's not well done—where is she?

*The Doors open. Enter PAGE. Several Women are seen grouped
about AURANTHE in the inner Room.*

PAGE. Alas! My lord, my lord! they cannot move her!
Her arms are stiff—her fingers clench'd and cold.

LUDOLPH. She's dead! [*Staggers and falls into their arms.*]

ETHELBERT. Take away the dagger.

GERSA. Softly; so!

OTHO. Thank God for that!

SIGIFRED. It could not harm him now.

GERSA. No!—brief be his anguish!

LUDOLPH. She's gone! I am content. Nobles, good night!

We are all weary—faint—set ope the doors—

I will to bed! To-morrow——

Where is your hand, father? What sultry air! [Dies.

The Curtain falls.

(JUNE-AUGUST, 1819.)

THE NOTES

THE NOTES

- p. 5 *Imitation of Spenser*. Stated by Brown to be the earliest of Keats' known poems, and to have been written while he was apprenticed to Hammond at Edmonton.
- p. 7 *Fill for me a brimming Bowl*. Dated in the MS. (Selincourt). Woodhouse in a note to his transcript of the Poem (*Crewe MSS.*) distinctly states that this poem and *Time's sea*, and *When I have fears*, all contain references to the same woman.
- p. 8 *On Death*. Dated by George Keats.
- p. 9 *To Byron*. Dated by Lord Houghton.
- p. 13 *To Chatterton*. Dated by Woodhouse (*Morgan Library*).
- p. 19 *Lines written on 29 May*. From Woodhouse (*Morgan Library*). Date conjectured.
- p. 20 *On Peace*. From Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*) Date conjectured.
- p. 28 *Apollo to the Graces*. From Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*), where the title is as given here.
- p. 29 *You say you love*. From Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*).
- p. 30 *Hither, hither, Love*. The MS. of these lines is in the possession of Dr. Roderick Terry, Newport, R.I. It was given by George Keats to John Howard Payne, who published them in an American magazine, *The Ladies' Companion*, in 1837. (Lowell.)
- p. 31 *O Solitude, if I must with thee dwell*. There is an interesting difficulty about the usual dating of this sonnet in the Spring of 1816. In the *European Magazine* for October 1816 appeared some verses signed G. F. M. (George Felton Mathew) which were obviously addressed to Keats. (They were copied by Woodhouse into his book in the Morgan collection.) The last two verses run:

And when evening shall free thee from Nature's decays,*
 And release thee from Study's severest control,
 Oh warm thee in Fancy's enlivening rays;
 And wash the dark spots of disease from thy soul.
 And let not the spirit of Poesy sleep;
 Of Fairies and Genii continue to tell—
 Nor suffer the innocent deer's timid leap
 To fright the wild bee from her flowery dell

* Alluding to his medical character.

As Woodhouse first pointed out, the last lines are obviously a reference to ll. 7-8 of *O Solitude*. In Mathew's verses they make perfect nonsense, only to be forgiven because they do refer to Keats' sonnet.

Secondly, there is an obvious connection between Mathew's verses and Keats' *Epistle* to him. In each the poet speculates fancifully on the circumstances of the other's childhood. Mathew thinks that the "Queen of the regions of air . . . cherished Keats' childhood"; Keats marvels that Mathew has

never told
How, from a flower, into a fish of gold
Apollo changed him.

Thirdly, Mathew's verses contain an equally plain reference to Keats' verses *On receiving a curious Shell*.

It was not the climate, or the scenery around,
It was not the nurse that attended thy youth,
That gave thee those blisses which richly abound
In magical numbers to charm and to soothe.

It is evident that Keats' *On receiving a curious Shell*, the *Epistle to Mathew*, and *O Solitude* are all intimately connected with Mathew's verses. The natural supposition is that Mathew had all three before him when he wrote. But whether we are entitled to conclude, with Miss Lowell, that *O Solitude* was therefore written about November 1815 is more doubtful. We cannot definitely fix when Mathew's verses were written. But since the psychological probability is in favour of Keats having posted off his *Epistle* as soon as it was written, and of Mathew having sat down to write more or less by return, I have followed Miss Lowell in placing *O Solitude* immediately before the *Epistle*. The reference to the *European Magazine* I owe to a paper by Miss Roberta Cornelius. For a fuller discussion of the problem see the writer's *Studies in Keats*.

p. 32 *Epistle to George Felton Mathew*. In the 1817 volume the *Epistles* are printed together and the quotation from *Britannia's Pastorals* serves as motto for them all.

p. 37 *As from the darkening Gloom*. Dated by Lord Houghton and Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*).

p. 39 *To Georgiana Augusta Wylie*. "Altered from a copy of verses written by K. at the request of his brother George, and by the latter sent as a valentine" to G. A. W. (*Woodhouse : Crewe MSS.*).

- p. 41 *On an Engraved Gem of Leander*. So entitled and so dated by Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*). Professor Garrod, on grounds of form, assigns it to 1817. But it seems to me impossible to set aside Woodhouse's date on formal grounds alone.
- p. 42 *How many Bards*. Dated Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*).
- p. 51 *To one who has been long in City pent*. Mr. Buxton Forman speaks of a transcript by George Keats in which the sonnet is described as "written in the fields, June 1816."
- p. 52 *To a Friend who sent me some Roses*. Dated by Tom Keats.
- p. 61 *To my Brother George*. Dated by George Keats.
- p. 67 *The Poet*. From Woodhouse (*Morgan Library*). Dated "about 1815-16." 1815 is obviously too early. Professor Garrod assigns it to 1817; and this is possible, on ground of form and style.
- p. 78 *On leaving some Friends at an early Hour*. Mr. Thomas Hardy and Professor Garrod independently conjectured "diamond tier" (l. 7). But Keats seems to have used "tier" as a dissyllable, see *Lamia*. Moreover, in the almost contemporary Epistle to George he writes:
- And when upheld, the wine from each light jar
Pours with the lustre of a falling star.
- p. 80 *Before he went to feed with Owls and Bats*. This and the previous lines were copied in a note-book by Henry Stephens, a fellow-student of Keats at Guy's Hospital. The meaning of the latter piece is now utterly obscure.
- p. 97 *Happy is England*. Miss Lowell states categorically that this sonnet was written in December 1816. She gives no authority for the statement, and I presume it is based on the Woodhouse transcripts in the Morgan Library. Since there is no internal evidence against the date, I have accepted it.
- p. 98 *To Kosciuszko*. Dated in *The Examiner*, in which it appeared on Feb. 16, 1817
- p. 99 *To Georgiana Augusta Wylie*. Dated by Tom Keats
- p. 100 *Written in Disgust of vulgar Superstition*. Dated by Tom Keats, "Sunday Evening, Dec. 24, 1816." Miss Lowell points out that Christmas Eve in that year was Dec. 22. Professor Garrod argues that the date should therefore be Dec. 24, 1815, which was a Sunday. I do not accept the argument. It is far more probable that Tom Keats mistook the day than the year; and the style of the sonnet is against 1815.

p. 111 *On the Sea*. In a letter from Carisbrooke to Reynolds of April 17, 1817. The sonnet follows immediately after these words: "From want of regular rest I have been rather *narvus*—and the passage in *Lear*—'Do you not hear the sea?'—has haunted me intensely."

In the same letter Keats says: "I shall forthwith begin my *Endymion*."

p. 112 *Endymion*. For Keats' attitude to his own poem, the following passages from his letters are relevant. He wrote to Bailey (Oct. 8, 1817):

"You may see the whole of the case by the following Extract from a Letter I wrote to George in the Spring—'As to what you say about my being a Poet, I can return no Answer but by saying that the high Idea I have of poetical fame makes me think I see it towering too high above me. At any rate, I have no right to talk until *Endymion* is finished, it will be a test, a trial of my Powers of Imagination, and chiefly of my invention which is a rare thing indeed—by which I must make 4000 lines of one bare circumstance, and fill them with poetry—and when I consider that this is a great task, and that when done it will take me but a dozen paces towards the temple of fame—it makes me say—God forbid that I should be without such a task! I have heard Hunt say, and I may be asked—*why endeavour after a long Poem?* To which I should answer, Do not the Lovers of Poetry like to have a little Region to wander in, where they may pick and choose, and in which the images are so numerous that many are forgotten and found new in a second Reading: which may be food for a Week's stroll in the summer? Do not they like this better than what they can read through before Mrs. Williams comes down stairs? a Morning work at most.

Besides, a long poem is a test of invention, which I take to be the Polar Star of Poetry, as Fancy is the Sails—and Imagination the rudder.—Did our great Poets ever write Short Pieces? I mean in the shape of Tales. This same invention seems indeed of late years to have been forgotten as a Poetical excellence—But enough of this, I put on no Laurels till I shall have finished *Endymion* and I hope Apollo is not angered at my having made a Mockery at Hunt's——"

And almost exactly a year later he wrote to Hessey (Oct. 9, 1818) thanking him for sending copies of letters written in defence of *Endymion* against critical attacks:

"I cannot but feel indebted to those gentlemen who have taken my part. As for the rest, I begin to get a little acquainted with my own strength and weakness.—Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critique on his own Works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what Blackwood or the Quarterly could possibly inflict—and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a

glow as my own solitary re-perception and ratification of what is fine. J.S. is perfectly right in regard to the slipshod Endymion. That it is so is no fault of mine. No!—though it may sound a little paradoxical. It is as good as I had power to make it—by myself. Had I been nervous about its being a perfect piece, and with that view asked advice, and trembled over every page, it would not have been written; for it is not in my nature to fumble—I will write independently. I have written independently *without judgment*. I may write independently, and *with judgment*, hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In “Endymion,” I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the Soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest. But I am nigh getting into a rant.”

But, more important than either of these references, is the beautiful preface to the poem which he wrote from Teignmouth, on April 10, 1818. It contains the quintessence of Keats’ character, in its humility and beauty and strength. I regret that reasons of format prevent it from taking its rightful place at the beginning of *Endymion*.

“Knowing within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I made it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year’s castigation would do them any good;—it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the

ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try once more before I bid it farewell."

- p.234 *On Oxford*. In a letter to Reynolds from Oxford, of September 1817. Keats writes: "Wordsworth sometimes, though in a fine way, gives us sentences in the style of school exercises. For instance,

The lake doth glitter,
Small birds twitter.

Now, I think this an excellent method of giving a very clear description of an interesting place, such as Oxford is." The verses follow.

There is a further illustration of Keats' meaning in a letter to the Misses Jeffrey, June 4, 1818. "I suppose Teignmouth and the *contagious* country is now quite remarkable—you might praise it I dare say in the manner of a grammatical exercise—*The trees are full—the den is crowded—the boats are sailing—the musick is playing.*"

- p.235 *Think not of it, sweet one, so . . .* Dated by Woodhouse "about 11 Nov., 1817."

- p.237 *In a Drear-Nighted December*. I agree with Sir Sidney Colvin and Miss Lowell in preferring the MS. reading of the line, "The feel of *not* to feel it," and I think with them that it is very doubtful whether the received version, "To know the change and feel it," has any authority whatever. It is probably an attempt by Woodhouse to avoid the substantive use of "feel," which, whether we like it or not, is characteristic of Keats. The sense of the MS. reading is preferable. Dated Dec. 1817 (Woodhouse: *Crewe MSS.*).

- p.241 *On Mrs. Reynolds' Cat*. So entitled and dated by Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*).

- p.242 *On seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair*. In a letter to Bailey of Jan. 23, 1818. "I was at Hunt's the other day, and he surprised me with a real authenticated lock of *Milton's Hair*. I know you would like what I wrote thereon so here it is—as they say of a Sheep in a Nursery Book." The poem follows. At the end: "This I did at Hunt's, at his request—perhaps I should have done something better alone and at home."

- p.244 *On sitting down to read King Lear once again*. Woodhouse has an interesting note on this sonnet, which has not been published. He quotes

from Keats' letter to Bailey of Jan. 23, 1818: "I have sent my first book of *Endymion* to the press, and this afternoon I shall begin preparing the second," and says: "Keats probably alludes to the temporary suspension of his task in the first four lines." This suggestion seems very plausible, and as may be seen from the four new lines now added to the *Epistle to J. H. Reynolds*, Keats probably thought of *Endymion* as a "romance."

The sonnet was sent in a letter to his brothers, Jan. 23, 1818: "I sat down yesterday to read 'King Lear' once again; the thing appeared to demand the prologue of a sonnet, I wrote it, and began to read."

- p. 246 *O Blush not so.* In a letter to Reynolds of Jan. 31, 1818, which begins: "I have parcell'd out this day for Letter Writing—more resolved thereon because your Letter will come as a refreshment and will have (sic parvis, etc.) the same effect as a Kiss in certain situations where people become over-generous. I have read this first sentence over, and think it savours rather; however an inward innocence is like a nested dove; or as the old song says——" The lines follow.
- p. 247 *Hence Burgundy, Claret, and Port.* In the same letter. "I cannot write in prose; it is a sunshiny day and I cannot, so here goes." The lines follow. "My dear Reynolds, you must forgive all this ranting—but the fact is, I cannot write sense this Morning—however, you shall have some—I will copy out my last Sonnet." (*When I have fears . . .*)
- p. 249 *Welcome Joy, and welcome Sorrow.* Dated 1818 by Woodhouse. Placed here because it seems to belong to a group of what Keats called "ron-deaus."
- p. 251 *Lines on the Mermaid Tavern; Robin Hood.* Sent in a letter to Reynolds, dated Feb. 3, 1818.
- p. 252
- p. 254 *To a Lady seen for a few Moments at Vauxhall.* Dated by Woodhouse.
- p. 255 *To the Nile.* Keats, writing to his brothers on Monday, Feb. 16, 1818, says: "The Wednesday before last, Shelley, Hunt, and I, wrote each a sennet on the Nile." Woodhouse gives Feb. 6, 1818.
- p. 256 *To Spenser.* The date given on a transcript of the sonnet was disputed by Lord Houghton and rejected by Forman. There is no sound reason for doubting it.
- p. 257 *Answer to a Sonnet by J. H. Reynolds.* Dated by Woodhouse.
- p. 258 *What the Thrush said . . .* In a letter to Reynolds (Feb. 19, 1818). "It has been an old comparison for our urging on—the Beehive; however, it seems to me that we should rather be the flower than the Bee—for it is a false notion that more is gained by receiving than giving—no, the receiver and the giver are equal in their benefits. The flower, I doubt not,

receives a fair guerdon from the Bee—its leaves blush deeper in the next spring—and who shall say between Man and Woman which is the most delighted? Now it is more noble to sit like Jove than to fly like Mercury—let us not therefore go hurrying about and collecting honey, bee-like buzzing here and there impatiently from a knowledge of what is to be aimed at; but let us open our leaves like a flower and be passive and receptive—budding patiently under the eye of Apollo and taking hints from every noble insect that favours us with a visit—sap will be given us for meat and dew for drink. I was led into these thoughts, my dear Reynolds, by the beauty of the morning operating on a sense of Idleness—I have not read any Books—the Morning said I was right—I had no idea but of the morning, and the thrush said I was right—seeming to say . . .” The poem follows.

p. 259 *To Homer*. Dated 1818 by Woodhouse and Lord Houghton.

p. 260 *The Human Seasons*. It is difficult to decide which is the authoritative text of this beautiful sonnet. Accordingly I print it in two forms—the first as it appears in a letter to Bailey from Teignmouth (March 1818); the second, as it was printed in Leigh Hunt’s *Literary Pocket Book* for 1819. The accepted reading in ll. 7–8 is:

and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto Heaven.

Probably the *Pocket Book* version was altered on account of the objection to the rhyme “ports”—“thoughts.” Nevertheless, the original version seems to me superior.

p. 268 *Modern Love*. Brown, who revised Woodhouse’s transcript of these verses (*Crewe MSS.*), amends the defective fifth line by inserting “too”—“Divine by loving too”—perhaps with authority.

p. 269 *The Castle Builder*. The fragments are given in this order by Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*).

p. 273 *Teignmouth: in a Letter to Haydon*. In a letter to Haydon from Teignmouth, March 21, 1818. “I have enjoyed the most delightful Walks these three fine days beautiful enough to make me content here all the summer could I stay . . .” Mr. Buxton Forman, who had the text of the letter before him, says that the critics “are clearly described not as ‘dark-hair’d’ or ‘dank-hair’d,’ but as ‘dack’d hair’d’ (shock-headed).” Of this word ‘dack’d’ I can find no trace in N.E.D. But since it was apparently familiar to Mr. Forman, it remains in the text. At the end. “Here’s some dogrel for you. Perhaps you would like a bit of B—hrell (Bitchrel).” Then follows:

- p.275 *Where be you going, you Devon Maid?* At the end: "I know not if this rhyming fit has done anything—it will be safe with you if worthy to put among my Lyrics."
- p.276 *Dawlish Fair*. In a letter to Rice, March 24, 1818, following: "I went yesterday to Dawlish Fair."
- p.277 *Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds*. The concluding four lines of this poem are here printed for the first time. They were found in the transcript of the poem in Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*). The "new Romance" was, of course, *Isabella*; and the description is of interest as tending to confirm Woodhouse's interpretation of *O golden-tongued Romance with serene lute* . . . referred to previously in these notes. Sent with a covering note to Reynolds, March 25, 1818. "In hopes of cheering you through a minute or two, I was determined will he nill he to send you some lines, so you will excuse the unconnected subject and careless verse. You know, I am sure, Claude's Enchanted Castle, and I wish you may be pleased with my remembrance of it."
- p.281 *To J. R.* Undoubtedly Jem Rice, as Mr. Colvin was the first to point out on seeing the transcript of the poem. Thus entitled in Woodhouse (*Crewe MSS.*). Miss Lowell rather plausibly conjectures a visit of Rice to Keats in Devonshire.
- p.282 *Isabella, or The Pot of Basil*. Keats wrote to Woodhouse on Sept. 21, 1819, when Woodhouse was urging him to publish the poem. "I will give you a few reasons why I shall persist in not publishing *The Pot of Basil*. It is too smokeable. I can get it smoked at the Carpenter's shaving chimney much more cheaply. There is too much inexperience of life, and simplicity of knowledge in it—which might do very well after one's death, but not while one is alive. There are very few would look to the reality. I intend to use more finesse with the Public. It is possible to write fine things which cannot be laugh'd at in any way. *Isabella* is what I should call, were I a reviewer 'A weak-sided Poem' with an amusing sober-sadness about it. Not that I do not think you and Reynolds are quite right about it—it is enough for me. But this will not do to be public. If I may say so, in my dramatic capacity I fully enter into the feeling; but in *Propria Persona* I should be apt to quizz it myself. There is no objection of this kind to *Lamia*—A good deal to *St. Agnes Eve*—only not so glaring." (Lowell: *Life II*, 336.)
- p.298 *Ode to Maia*. In a letter to Reynolds, May 3, 1818. "With respect to the affections and Poetry you must know by a sympathy my thoughts that way, and I dare say these few lines will be but a ratification: I wrote them on May-day—and intend to finish the ode all in good time."

- p.299 *Acrostic*. Written in a letter to his brother George and his sister-in-law, dated "Foot of Helvellyn, June 27." This letter was first published by Miss Lowell (Life II, 26). "Ha! my dear Sister George I wish I knew what humour you were in that I might accomodate myself to any one of your amiabilities. Shall it be a Sonnet or a Pun or an Acrostic, a Riddle or a Ballad—perhaps it may turn out a Song, and perhaps turn out a Sermon.' I'll write you on my word the first and most likely the last I shall ever do, because it has struck me—what shall it be about." The acrostic follows.
- p.300 *Sweet, Sweet is the Greeting of Eyes*. From a portion of the same letter dated June 28.
- p.301 *On visiting the Tomb of Burns*. In a letter to Tom Keats, dated June 29–July 2, 1818. "You will see by this sonnet that I am at Dumfries. We have dined in Scotland. Burns's tomb is in the churchyard corner, not very much to my taste, though on a scale large enough to show they wanted to honour him. Mrs. Burns lives in this place; most likely we shall see her to-morrow. This sonnet I have written in a strange mood, half-asleep. I know not how it is, the Clouds, the Sky, the Houses, all seem anti-Grecian and anti-Charlemagnish. I will endeavour to get rid of my prejudices and tell you fairly about the Scotch." A question-mark has been substituted for the mark of exclamation in l. 12. Keats frequently used the latter for the former.
- p.302 *Meg Merrilies* and *A Song about Myself* were both written for his young sister Fanny, in a letter to her, dated "Dumfries, July 2." "If you like these sort of ballads," he says at the end of *Meg Merrilies*, "I will now and then scribble one for you." Then, after an obvious interval, he continues. "Since I scribbled the song we have walked through a beautiful country to Kirkcudbright—at which place I will write you a song about myself." After the song, he says: "Dear Fanny, I am ashamed of writing you such stuff, nor would I if it were not for being tired after my day's walking." I think perhaps the song was in his head while he was walking, and that it is not fantastic to discern in its metre the beat of weary trampers' feet.
- p.308 *A Galloway Song*. Sent to Tom Keats in a letter "dated Ballantrae, July 10." "The reason of my writing these lines was that Brown wanted to impose a Galloway song upon Dilke—but it won't do. The subject I got from meeting a wedding just as we came down into this place."
- p.310 *To Ailsa Rock*. Sent in the same letter. "We had a gradual ascent and got among the tops of the Mountains whence in a little time I descried in the Sea Ailsa Rock 940 feet high—it was 15 Miles distant and seemed close upon us. The effect of Ailsa with the peculiar perspective of the Sea in connection with the ground we stood on, and the misty rain then falling

gave me a complete Idea of a deluge. Ailsa struck me very suddenly—really I was a little alarmed.” After copying the sonnet he says: “This is the only Sonnet of any worth I have of late written—I hope you will like it.”

p. 311

Written in the Cottage where Burns was born. In a letter to Reynolds begun on July 11 at Maybole Keats says: “I begin a letter to you because I am approaching Burns’s cottage very fast. We have made continual inquiries from the time we saw his tomb at Dumfries—his name is of course known all about—his great reputation among the plodding people is, ‘that he wrote a good *mony* sensible things.’ One of the pleasantest means of annulling self is approaching such a shrine as the Cottage of Burns—we need not think of his misery—that is all gone, bad luck to it—I shall look upon it hereafter with unmixed pleasure, as I do upon my Stratford-on-Avon day with Bailey.” Some days later he continues: “We went to the cottage and took some Whisky. I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines under the roof—they are so bad I cannot transcribe them. The man at the Cottage was a great Bore with his Anecdotes—I hate the rascal—his life consists in fuz, fuzzy, fuzziest. He drinks glasses five for the Quarter and twelve for the hour—he is a mahogany-faced old Jackass who knew Burns. He ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him. He calls himself ‘a curious old Bitch’—but he is a flat old dog—I should like to employ Caliph Vathek to kick him. O the flummery of a birthplace! Cant! cant! cant! It is enough to give a spirit the guts-ache. Many a true word, they say, is spoken in jest—this may be because his gab hindered my sublimity: the flat dog made me write a flat sonnet. My dear Reynolds—I cannot write about scenery and visitings—Fancy is indeed less than a present palpable reality, but it is greater than remembrance—you would lift your eyes from Homer only to see close before you the real Isle of Tenedos—you would rather read Homer afterwards than remember yourself. One song of Burns’s is of more worth to you than all I could think for a whole year in his native country. His Misery is a dead weight upon the nimbleness of one’s quill—I tried to forget it—to drink Toddy without any Care—to write a merry sonnet—it won’t do—he talked with Bitches—he drank with blackguards, he was miserable. We can see horribly clear in the works of such a man his whole life, as if we were God’s spies. What were his addresses to Jean in the later part of his life?”

p. 312

Lines written in the Highlands after a Visit to Burns’s Country. In a letter to Bailey, dated July 18: “I had determined to write a sonnet in the cottage [Burns’s]. I did—but lawk! it was so wretched I destroyed it—however in a few days afterwards I wrote some lines cousin-german to the circumstance, which I will transcribe.” The former of the two

passages quoted from the letter to Reynolds in the previous note is very necessary to the understanding of these *Lines*, which are somewhat obscure without it and have been unduly neglected.

p.315 *The Gadfly*. Sent to Tom Keats in a letter dated July 17. "I have just been bathing in Loch Fyne a salt water Lake opposite the windows,—quite pat and fresh but for the cursed Gad flies—damn 'em they have been at me ever since I left the swan and two necks."

p.317 *On hearing the Bagpipe and seeing "The Stranger" played at Inverary*. In the same letter to Tom Keats. "On entering Inverary we saw a Play Bill . . . so I went to the Barn alone where I saw The Stranger accompanied by a Bag-pipe. There they went on about interesting creators and human nater till the Curtain fell, and then came the Bag-pipe. When Mrs. Haller fainted, down went the Curtain and out came the Bag-pipe—at the heart-rending, shoemending reconciliation the piper blew amain. I never read or saw this play before; not the Bag-pipe nor the wretched players themselves were little [*sic* ? much] in comparison with it—thank heaven it has been scoffed at lately almost to a fashion."

p.318 *Staffa*. In a letter to Tom Keats received by him on August 3. The date of the poem can be fixed at July 24. The effect of the poem is frequently falsified by omitting the last six lines of Lycidas' speech. "I am puzzled how to give you an idea of Staffa. It can only be represented by a first-rate drawing . . . The colour of the columns is a sort of black with a lurking gloom of purple therein . . . But it is impossible to describe it." The poem follows. "I am sorry I am so indolent as to write such stuff as this—it can't be helped."

p.320 *Written upon Ben Nevis*. Sent to Tom Keats in a letter, dated August 3, which contains the *Dialogue*. "We gained the first tolerable level after the valley to the height of what in the Valley we had thought the top and saw still above us another huge crag which still the Guide said was not the top—to that we made with an obstinate fag, and having gained it there came on a Mist, so that from that part to the very top we walked in a Mist. . . . After a little time the Mist cleared away, but still there were large Clouds about attracted by old Ben to a certain distance so as to form as it appeared large dome curtains which kept sailing about, opening and shutting at intervals here and there and everywhere; so that although we did not see one vast wide extent of prospect all round we saw something perhaps finer—these cloudveils opening with a dissolving motion and showing us the mountainous region beneath as through a loophole—these cloudy loopholes ever varying and discovering fresh prospect east, west, north and south . . ."

"I have said nothing yet of our getting on among the loose stones large and small, sometimes on two, sometimes on three, sometimes four legs—sometimes two and stick, sometimes three and stick, then four again, then two, then a jump, so that we kept on ringing changes on foot, hand, stick, jump, boggle, stumble, foot, hand, foot (very gingerly), stick again, and then again a game at all fours. After all there was one Mrs. Cameron of 50 years of age and the fattest woman in all Invernessshire who got up this mountain some few years ago—true she had her servants—but then she had herself. She ought to have hired Sisyphus—"Up the high hill he heaves a huge round—Mrs. Cameron." 'Tis said a little conversation took place between the mountain and the Lady. After taking a glass of Whiskey as she was tolerably seated at ease she thus began—"The *Dialogue* follows. At the end Keats says: "But what surprises me above all is how this Lady got down again. I felt it horribly. 'Twas the most vile descent—shook me all to pieces. Overleaf you will find a Sonnet I wrote on the top of Ben Nevis."

p.324 *On some Skulls in Beaulieu Abbey, near Inverness.* These stanzas, Keats told Woodhouse, were his share of a composite poem by Keats and Brown written in August, 1818. Since Keats' lines contain some characteristic touches, they have been included here. Fortunately they can be understood in independence of Brown's more facetious contribution. The complete poem may be read in Sir Sidney Colvin's *Life of John Keats* (3rd edn., Appendix II).

p.325 *Fragment of a Sonnet: from Ronsard.* Sent to Reynolds in a letter of September 21 or 22, 1818. "Here is a free translation of a Sonnet of Ronsard, which I think will please you—I have the loan of his works—they have great Beauties." The translation follows. "I had not the original by me when I wrote it, and did not recollect the purport of the last lines." A single line of the version: "Love poured her beauty into my warm veins" was sent by Keats in a letter to Dilke of September 21.

p.326 *A Prophecy.* Written in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats of October, 1818. "Those Americans are great, but they are not sublime Man—the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime. . . . You must endeavour to infuse a little Spirit of another sort into the settlement; always with a great caution, for thereby you may do your descendants more good than you may imagine. If I had a prayer to make for any great good, next to Tom's recovery, it should be that one of your Children should be the first American Poet. I have a great mind to make a prophecy, and they say prophecies work out their own fulfilment." The poem follows.

p. 328 *Where's the Poet? Show him! show him.* Dated 1818 in the B.M. transcript. Placed here, somewhat arbitrarily, because of its manifest affinity to the thought of a letter written to Woodhouse postmarked October 27, 1818. "As to the poetical character itself (I mean that sort, of which, if I am anything, I am a member . . .) it is not itself—it has no self—it is everything and nothing—it has no character—it enjoys light and shade; in lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated. It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet. It does no harm its relish of the dark side of things, any more than from its taste for the bright one, because they both end in speculation. A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no Identity—he is for ever in for and filling some other body."

p. 329 *Hyperion.* The date of the composition of *Hyperion* is discussed at length in the Appendix to the editor's *Keats and Shakespeare*, where the conclusion is reached that Books I and II were written between September, 1818, and Tom Keats' death on December 1, and most of Book III some time in early April, 1819. For the detailed arguments on which these conclusions are based readers must be referred to the Appendix itself.

The fragment of Book III originally ended, according to a pencil note,

At length
Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs
Celestial glory dawn'd, he was a god.

Since Apollo was a god already, this ending, whether original or an attempted later improvement, had to be discarded. (See *Keats and Shakespeare*, ch. VII.)

p. 356 *Fancy.* Both versions of this poem are printed, for biographical reasons. The longer and original version was copied into the journal-letter to George and Georgiana (December, 1818–January, 1819). For the significance of the poem see *Keats and Shakespeare*, pp. 106–107.

p. 363 *Ode.* Because Keats wrote this poem in a volume of Beaumont and Fletcher, Mr. Buxton Forman concluded that it was addressed to those two poets. I am quite unconvinced by this, and believe that the reference is general. Moreover, in the journal-letter of December–January, 1818, in which they both occur, Keats distinctly says of this and previous poem: "Here are the poems—they will explain themselves—as all poems should do without any comment." The names of Beaumont and Fletcher are not mentioned.

Of both the poems Keats says: "These are specimens of a sort of rondeau which I think I shall become partial to—because you have one idea amplified with greater ease and more delight and freedom than in the sonnet. . . . There is just room I see in this page to copy a little thing I wrote off to some Music as it was playing." *I had a Dove* then follows.

p.366 *Hush, hush! tread softly! hush, hush my dear!* Dated 1818 by Lord Houghton. Mr. Buxton Forman was told by Miss Charlotte Reynolds that the song was composed to a Spanish air which she used to play to Keats. It is just possible that *I had a Dove* was also written to Miss Charlotte Reynolds' music.

p.369 *The Eve of St. Agnes.* In the journal-letter to George and Georgiana, dated Sunday, February 14(?), Keats says: "In my next packet . . . I shall send you my *Pot of Basil*, *St. Agnes Eve*, and if I should have finished it a little thing called the *Eve of St. Mark*. You see what fine Mother Radcliffe names I have—it is not my fault—I do not search for them." There was some later revision of *The Eve of St. Agnes* in the autumn. But substantially it was finished in February 1819.

p.383 *The Eve of St. Mark.* Keats copied this poem in his journal-letter from Winchester to his brother and sister-in-law on September 20, 1819. "The great beauty of poetry," he says, "is that it makes everything, every place, interesting. The palatine Venice and the abbottine Winchester are equally interesting. Some time since I began a poem called "The Eve of St. Mark," quite in the spirit of town quietude. I think it will give you the sensation of walking about an old country town in a coolish evening. I know not whether I shall finish it; I will give it so far as I have gone." In the text I have frequently adopted the lighter punctuation of the British Museum MS.

In the Woodhouse transcript sixteen extra lines are given; also the definite date of composition, Feb. 13-17, 1819.

Gif ye wol standen hardie wight—
Amiddes of the blacke night—
Righte in the churchè porch, pardie
Ye wol behold a companie
Approchen thee full dolourouse
For sooth to sain from everich house
Be it in city or village
Wol come the Phantom and image
Of ilka gent and ilka carle
Whom coldè Deathè hath in parle

And wol some day that very year
 Touchen with foulè venime spear
 And sadly do them all to die—
 Hem all shalt thou see verilie—
 And everichon shall by thee pass
 All who must die that year Alas.

This passage, which is given with two misprints by Professor de Selincourt, appears to have formed no part of the original version. Possibly it marks an abandoned attempt to continue the poem in the autumn of 1819. Its chief value is that it confirms the established opinion as to the legend which Keats had in mind.

p.387 *Why did I laugh to-night?* Dated March 1819 by the journal-letter in which it occurs. The meaning of this impressive but somewhat obscure sonnet is indicated in *Keats and Shakespeare*, p. 123.

p.388 *On a Dream.* In the journal-letter (April 16?) "The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more—it is that one in which he meets with Paolo and Francesca. I had passed many days in rather a low state of mind, and in the midst of them I dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life. I floated about the whirling atmosphere as it is described with a beautiful figure, to whose lips mine were joined, as it seemed for an age—and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm—even flowery tree-tops sprung up, and we rested on them, sometimes with the lightness of a cloud, till the wind blew us away again. I tried a sonnet upon it—there are fourteen lines, but nothing of what I felt in it. O that I could dream it every night."

p.389 *Bright Star! would I were steadfast as thou art!* I believe the original form of this sonnet has never been given entire in an edition of Keats' poems. It is taken from a transcript by Brown, dated 1819, which is among the Crewe MSS. These transcripts were obviously written in a book (no doubt the book to which Keats refers in his journal-letter, April 30: "Brown has been here rummaging up some of my old sins—that is to say sonnets...I have just written one on Fame—which Brown is transcribing and he has his book and mine"). The book was taken to pieces for the purposes of Lord Houghton's "Life and Letters," and the sheets have been bound up with other relevant papers to form a volume in Lord Crewe's collection. On another sheet, apparently from this same book, is a transcript of the *Ode to Autumn*. This transcript has been corrected by Keats himself. It is probable, therefore, that Keats

frequently looked over Brown's book, and that the sonnet as given here is in the form which it retained until 1820.

The date of this sonnet had been independently established by a remarkable chain of evidence. In 1924 Professor Rusk, of Indiana, was examining the files of the *Western Messenger* of Louisville, Kentucky, for June 1836, when he discovered a communication from George Keats which contained a letter from his brother John, written during the Scotch tour. Not only is it one of the best, as it is the first of the Scotch letters, (dated June 25, 1818,) but it contains the following startling passage describing Windermere :

"There are many disfigurements to this Lake—not in the way of land or Water. No; the two views we have had of it are of the most noble tenderness—they can never fade away—they make one forget the divisions of life; age, youth, poverty and riches; and refine one's sensual vision into a sort of north star which can never cease to be open lidded and steadfast over the wonders of the great Power."

Professor Rusk pointed out the manifest relation between this and the *Bright Star* sonnet. Miss Lowell, to whom we owe this information (Life II, 22), excellently followed up the clue by pointing out that in his journal-letter (April 15, 1819) Keats says: "I have been to Mrs. Bentleys this morning, and put all the letters to and from you and poor Tom and me [in order]." Miss Lowell, therefore, acutely conjectured that Keats in re-reading his old letters had been struck by his own phrase and the serenity which it embodied, and had used the re-awakened emotion for his sonnet. To me this conjecture is convincing.

In any case, without this strange chain of external evidences, Brown's transcript definitely dates the sonnet in 1819.

p.390 *An Extempore.* In the journal-letter apparently under date April 15. Introduced by the words: "Shall I treat you with a little extempore?" and concluded by "Brown is gone to bed—and I am tired of rhyming."

p.393 *On Charles Armitage Brown.* In the journal-letter (April 16?) "Brown this morning is writing some Spenserian stanzas against Mrs., Miss Brawne and me; so I shall amuse myself with him a little: in the manner of Spenser——." The verses conclude with, "This character would ensure him a situation in the establishment of patient Griselda." These admirable verses have hitherto been printed with the meaningless line "He 'sdeign'd the swine-head at the wassail bowl." But both in Keats' MS. and Brown's transcript (both in the Crewe collection) it plainly reads "He 'sdeign'd the swineherd at the wassail bowl," which fits the succeeding lines perfectly.

p.394 *Two or three Posies.* In a letter to Fanny Keats (April 17?). It seemed absolutely necessary in this case to give the actual context of the letter, without which the nonsense loses its charm. The missing word is, of course, "Mrs. Abbeys."

p.396 *La Belle Dame sans merci.* In the journal-letter, headed "Wednesday Evening." (April 28?) Mr. Forman and Professor de Selincourt believe that it was composed direct into the letter. This is, to me, doubtful. It was subsequently published in Keats' life-time in Hunt's *The Indicator*, May 10, 1820, over the disillusioned name of "Caviare." I have followed Professor de Selincourt's excellent example in giving the original and the revised versions side by side.

At the end of the poem as given in the journal-letter Keats wrote: "Why four kisses—you will say—why four because I wish to restrain the headlong impetuosity of my Muse—she would fain have said 'score' without hurting the rhyme—but we must temper the Imagination as the Critics say with Judgment. I was obliged to choose an even number that both eyes might have fair play, and to speak truly I think two a piece quite sufficient. Suppose I had said seven, there would have been three and a half a piece—a very awkward affair and well got out of on my side."

p.400 *Chorus of Four Fairies.* In the journal-letter immediately following the comment on *La Belle Dame* above. I have mainly followed the version as it appears in the letter of which the MS. is at Crewe House. The added line, "When his arched course is run," comes from Woodhouse's transcript.

p.405 *Ode to Psyche.* Immediately after copying *To Sleep* in the journal-letter, Keats writes: "The following Poem—the last I have written—is the first and the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains. I have for the most part dash'd off my lines in a hurry. This I have done leisurely—I think it reads the more richly for it, and will I hope encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit. You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour—and perhaps never thought of in the old religion—I am more orthodox than to let a heathen Goddess be so neglected."

Since this portion of the letter appears to have been written on the same day as the preceding sonnets were copied, it would seem to follow that the *Ode to Psyche* was written after the first sonnet *On Fame*, and the sonnet *To Sleep*, and before the second sonnet on *Fame*. This order I have therefore adopted. But it may be that Keats did not class his

sonnets as poems. In that case, perhaps, the *Ode to Psyche* should be placed before the first sonnet *On Fame*. In any case I follow Sir Sidney Colvin and Miss Lowell in believing that this passage of the letter establishes that the *Ode to Psyche* was the first of the great Odes.

p.408 *To Sleep*. In the journal-letter, April 30, Keats writes: "Brown has been here rummaging up some of my old sins—that is to say sonnets. I do not think you remember them so I will copy them out as well as two or three lately written. I have just written one on Fame—which Brown is transcribing and he has his book and mine. I must employ myself perhaps in a sonnet on the same subject." The sonnet *How fever'd is that man* is then given in a form which shows that it was composed there and then. It follows that *Fame like a wayward girl* and *To Sleep* and the *Ode to Psyche* (which follow incontinently and are obviously fair copies) were all written before *How fever'd is that man*. In *To Sleep* I have adopted the reading "hoards" given authority by the Woodhouse transcripts.

p.410 *On the Sonnet*. The last poem copied into the journal-letter, immediately before the words: "This is the third of May."

p.411 *Ode on Melancholy, Ode to a Nightingale, Ode on a Grecian Urn, Ode*
p.412 *on Indolence*. The order of these Odes is purely conjectural. If we accept
p.415 as a datum that the *Ode to Psyche* is the first of the Odes (and it would
p.417 not be very difficult to challenge even that datum) it would appear from
the terms of the journal-letter that the remaining Odes were written during May. But when we remember that, if we take the terms of this letter quite literally, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* was written without pains and dashed off in a hurry, it is quite conceivable that one at least of the remaining Odes may have been written in April. I know of no convincing internal evidence by which they can be ordered. The order adopted is a matter of idiosyncrasy. The one critical point of evidence is that all these four Odes show an equal mastery of this original form, whereas the *Ode to Psyche* is in comparison technically immature.

p.417 *Ode on Indolence*. Some critics have been tempted to place the writing of this Ode near to Friday, March 19, on which date Keats wrote in his journal-letter: "This morning I am in a sort of temper indolent and supremely careless—I long after a stanza or two of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*. My passions are all asleep, from my having slumbered till nearly eleven, and weakened the animal fibre all over me to a delightful sensation about three degrees on this side of faintness. If I had teeth of pearl and the breath of lillies I should call it languor, but as I am I must call it laziness. In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are

relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no show of enticement and pain no unbearable power. Neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love have any alertness of countenance as they pass by me: they seem rather like three figures on a greek vase—a Man and two women whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguise. This is the only happiness, and is a rare instance of advantage in the body overpowering the Mind.” The intimate connection of that passage with the Ode is manifest. But the Ode itself seems to have been written out of a memory, or perhaps a recurrence, of the experience, the significance of which is discussed in *Keats and Shakespeare*, pp. 117-118. The setting of the Ode is certainly in May or early summer.

Probably the composition of the Ode was not far distant from the date (June 8?) on which he wrote to Miss Jeffrey, “I have been very idle lately, very averse to writing; both from the overpowering idea of our dead poets and from abatement of my love of fame. I hope I am a little more of a Philosopher than I was, consequently a little less of a versifying Pet-lamb.” At all events I am pretty certain that the *Ode on Indolence* was the last of the four.

p.441

The Fall of Hyperion: a Dream. The evidence on which the ordering of this poem is based is given at length in the Appendix to *Keats and Shakespeare*. Its place was originally established by Sir Sidney Colvin, and rashly challenged by Miss Lowell. In collating the text again with the two Woodhouse transcripts, I find that Professor de Selincourt has missed (probably in his enviable excitement at discovering the true reading of the old “environed”) the reading, plain in both transcripts, “ached.” The lines which formerly read

I ask'd to see what things the hollow brow
Behind environ'd

should read

I ached to see what things the hollow brow
Behind enwomb'd.

The improvement in both cases is considerable; but there is a peculiar interest in “ached,” because it directly relates Keats’ thought here to his conception of Apollo in the third book of *Hyperion*—to the “aching ignorance” with which Apollo sought knowledge of Mnemosyne.

Mute thou remainest—Mute! Yet I can read
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.

It is, in fact, a further link in the evidence for identifying Keats with Apollo, which is put forward in *Keats and Shakespeare*, pp. 79-93.

For reasons given at length in *Keats and Shakespeare*, pp. 178-197, I cannot follow Professor de Selincourt in restoring the following lines, given in the Woodhouse transcripts, to the text. They follow after:

So answered I, continuing, "If it please . . .

It seems to me evident that Keats himself had rejected them; otherwise he would not have repeated "*Majestic shadow*, tell me where I am." Woodhouse states that "Keats seems to have intended to erase them." And, as I think I have shown, they are false to Keats' real train of thought in the context of the poem. But the lines, in themselves, are of great value—not as poetry, for they were hurriedly written and deliberately rejected—but as containing a pointed expression of the fundamental distinction between the "poet" and the "dreamer," which was essential to Keats' thought on the nature of poetry.

Majestic shadow, tell me: sure not all
Those melodies sung into the world's ear
Are useless: sure a poet is a sage;
A humanist, Physician to all men.
That I am none I feel, as Vultures feel
They are no birds when Eagles are abroad.
What am I then? Thou spakest of my tribe:
What tribe?"—The tall shade veil'd in drooping white
Then spake, so much more earnest, that the breath
Mov'd the thin linen folds that drooping hung
About a golden censer from the hand
Pendent.—"Art thou not of the dreamer tribe?
The poet and the dreamer are distinct,
Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.
The one pours out a balm upon the world,
The other vexes it." Then shouted I
Spite of myself, and with a Pythia's spleen
"Apollo! faded, O farflown Apollo!
Where is thy misty pestilence to creep
Into the dwellings, through the door crannies,
Of all mock lyrists, large self-worshippers
And careless Hectorers in proud bad verse.
Tho' I breathe death with them it will be life
To see them sprawl before me into graves.
Majestic shadow, tell me where I am . . .

p.456 *A Party of Lovers.* Sent in a letter of September 17, 1819, to George Keats with this preamble: "Nothing strikes me so forcibly with a sense of the ridiculous as love. A man in love I do think cuts the sorriest figure in the world; queer, when I know a poor fool to be really in pain about it, I could burst out laughing in his face. His pathetic visage becomes irresistible . . . Somewhere in the Spectator is related an account of a man inviting a party of stutterers and squinters to his table. It would please me more to scrape together a party of lovers—not to dinner, but to tea. There would be no fighting as among Knights of old."

After the lines, he writes: "You see, I cannot get on without writing, as boys do at school, a few nonsense verses. I begin them, and before I have written six the whim has passed—if there is anything deserving so respectable a name in them."

p.457 *To Autumn.* Keats wrote to Reynolds on September 22, 1819: "How beautiful the season is now—How fine the air—a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather—Dian skies—I never liked stubble-field so much as now—Aye better than the chilly green of the Spring. Somehow, a stubble-field looks warm—in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it." The poem was actually sent in a letter of the same day to Woodhouse.

p.462 *Ode to Fanny.* There is no external evidence for the date of this poem. The consensus of previous editors assigns it to the spring of 1819. I have preferred to place it in the winter of the year.

p.503 *Lines supposed to have been addressed to Fanny Brawne.* It is, I think, probable that these lines, discovered by Mr. Buxton Forman in the margin of the manuscript of the *Cap and Bells*, were written in 1820.

p.511 *Otho the Great.* The final line, "Where is your hand, father? What sultry air!" is added in Keats' handwriting to the transcript of the play by Brown in the Crewe MSS. This copy was carefully corrected by Keats, and marks the final form of the play. How the correction came to escape previous editors I do not know.

I have said in the preface that *Otho the Great* has no intimate connection with the moods of the man Keats; and as a general proposition it will stand. But my examination of the Brown transcript revealed an interesting fact which seems worthy of note. It shows that the following description of Auranthe in Act V, scene v, was inserted into the play as an after-thought.

As for the third,
Deep blue eyes—semi-shaded by white lids,
Finish'd with lashes fine for more soft shade,
Completed by her twin-arch'd ebon brows—
White temples of exactest elegance,
Of even mould felicitous and smooth—
Cheeks fashion'd tenderly on either side,
So perfect, so divine that our poor eyes
Are dazzled with the sweet proportioning,
And wonder that 'tis so,—the magic chance!
Her nostrils, small, fragrant, faery-delicate;
Her lips—I swear no human bones e'er wore
So taking a disguise—you shall behold her.

The passage reminded me, as I read it again, of two very different pictures. First, of Moneta in *The Fall of Hyperion*.

But for her eyes I should have fled away.
They held me back with a benignant light,
Soft mitigated by divinest lids
Half closed . . .

Unless I am mistaken there is an echo of "semi-shaded by white lids" in that sublime picture of the goddess. Secondly, I was reminded of Keats' description of Fanny Brawne's nostrils: "Her nostrils are fine—though a little painful." I had wondered what precisely Keats meant by calling them "a little painful"; I had imagined he meant that they were so delicate as to give the impression of an excessive fragility and sensitiveness. "Faery-delicate" is, I think, exactly what he meant. When we remember also that Fanny Brawne's eyes were blue we have some substantial excuse for finding in the passage an idealized picture of her, which seems to have contributed something, on a yet higher level of idealization, to the unforgettable vision of Moneta.

ADDENDUM

The following two verses were found in Keats' handwriting in the *Crewe MSS.* I do not know whether they are original, or not. Possibly Keats was trying to remember a schoolboy rhyme. The handwriting appears to me to be not earlier than 1818.

O grant that like to Peter I
May like to Peter B
And tell me lovely Jesus Y
This Peter went to C.

O grant that like to Peter I
May like to Peter B
And tell me lovely Jesus Y
Old Jonah went to C.

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